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WORDS  
ANCIENT AND MODERN



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- \* SOMETHING ABOUT WORDS
  - \* WORDS AND NAMES
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  - \* THE ROMANCE OF NAMES
  - \* SURNAMES
  - \* JACK AND JILL
  - \* AN ETYMOLOGICAL DICTIONARY  
OF MODERN ENGLISH
- \* Out of Print.*

# WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

By  
ERNEST WEEKLEY

*Polonius : What do you read, my lord?*

*Hamlet : Words, words, words.*

*(Hamlet, ii, i.)*

LONDON  
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.1

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*How many honest words have suffered  
corruption since Chaucer's day!*

(Thomas Middleton)

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## PREFACE

THIS is not a mere reprint or new edition of an earlier work. In 1926 I published *Words Ancient and Modern*, a series of short "biographies" of words that seemed likely to interest the intelligent. This was followed the next year by *More Words Ancient and Modern*, which dealt exclusively with compounds, a type of word seldom adequately treated by dictionaries. Both books have long been out of print.

The present volume contains a selection from the above two works along with a number of articles taken from some other books of mine or contributed to the Press and to various learned publications, such as the *Transactions of the Philological Society*. Every item has been carefully revised, sometimes pruned of irrelevancies, sometimes slightly elaborated. As the work has been carried out "in exile" and with few books, a nomadic existence and war-time taxation having compelled me to dispose of my library, I hope that some measure of indulgence may be granted to any imperfections.

The book is divided into three chapters. The first consists of words of established etymology which seem to me by their origin and vicissitudes of a nature to interest the word-lover. The second chapter attempts to trace the etymology of words which the *Oxford Dictionary* or the latest edition of Webster leave unsolved, explain inadequately or, in my opinion, erroneously. I find that many of these proposed etymologies are adopted by the new Webster, a most admirable piece of work. The editors may have arrived at the same results independently, but there is some suggestion of acknowledgement in the fact that my name appears in the list of celebrities which forms an appendix to the dictionary, along with Aristotle, Julius



## PREFACE

Caesar, Shakespeare, and others of less importance' The third chapter is reprinted from my Words and Names. It may save some guleless souls from being deluded by the nonsense which periodically gets into print about the most famous, and one of the most obvious, of English names.

Perhaps an octogenarian may be allowed a personal reminiscence. Quite sixty-five years ago, the reading of Scott convinced me that word-hunting is great fun, and at eighty I still hold that opinion. In three respects I may claim some slight originality for my method of research. I have made much more use than other etymologists of the early Latin-English and other dictionaries, from the 15th century onward, being of opinion that the first essential is not to know what a word means now, but what it meant for those who first used it. This point is well illustrated by such words as *caulk* and *foil*. Having a more or less bowing acquaintance with various European languages, I have given special attention to "semantic" parallels, see, for instance, *akimbo* and *dapple-grey*. I have shown repeatedly that the study of medieval surnames, i.e. nicknames, often takes a word back many centuries before literary records, and sometimes supplies a clue to its origin. An example is *cheesemonger*, which I have made the text for a rather rambling discourse on word-lore.

I hope that this volume, though a mere compilation from earlier work, may give some pleasure to the very small public which is interested in a branch of knowledge recommended by Archbishop Ussher to John Evelyn as "above all human studies."

ERNEST WEEKLEY

CRIGCIETH.

June, 1946

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## EARLY DICTIONARIES MOST FREQUENTLY QUOTED

- Minsheu, *Guide into Tongues* (1617)  
Phillips, *New World of Words* (1678).  
Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language* (3rd ed.,  
1765).
- Cooper, *Latin-English* (1573).  
Holyoak, *Latin-English* (1612).  
Littleton, *Latin-English* (1677).
- Palsgrave, *French-English* (1530).  
Cotgrave, *French-English* (1611).
- Florio, *Italian-English* (1598).  
Torriano, *Italian-English* (1659).
- Percyvall, *Spanish-English* (1591).  
Minsheu, *Spanish-English* (1599).
- Kilian, *Dutch-Latin* (1620).
- Ludwig, *German-English* (1706, 1716).

## Chapter I

# LIVES OF WORDS

### Agnostic

I AM not sure of the name of the "literary man" who derived *agnostic* from Lat. *agnoscere*, to acknowledge. The late W. P. Ker once told me that it was \* \* \*, but a cursory inspection of \* \* \* 's works has not led to the discovery of the passage in question.

In the middle of the 19th century much hostility was aroused in pious circles by the "atheistical" teachings of those biologists who expressed doubts as to the literal exactitude of the first chapter of Genesis. The great name on the scientific side in the struggle between old-fashioned theology and the evolution theory was that of Thomas Henry Huxley, who was not only a great biologist, but a distinguished prose-writer. As Dr Julian Huxley once wrote, "It is sometimes as well in these easier-going and theologically more tolerant days to remember what power of inertia, what violence of the *odium theologicum*, there was in the opposition. 'Professor Huxley' became a sort of bogey in orthodox lower middle-class families, almost as 'Boney' had done for the nation in earlier days" (*Observer*, May 3, 1925).

Few people like the name *atheist*, offensive when applied to another, and only assumed as a title by the bounder. *Unbeliever* is almost as bad: one might as well be called *miscreant*<sup>1</sup> at once. Huxley wanted an inoffensive word to express the attitude of mind represented by Montaigne's "Que sçais-je?" He thought of the altar which St. Paul (*Acts xvii. 23*) saw at Athens "to the Unknown God,"

<sup>1</sup> Old Fr. *mescreant*, present participle of *mescreire*, to disbelieve.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

Ἀγνώστω Θεῷ, and coined *agnostic* from the Greek word (= unknowing, unknown, unknowable), by analogy with *gnostic*, a name given to Early Christian heretical sects which claimed transcendental knowledge and power of mystic interpretation. The word was suggested by Huxley at a gathering held in 1869 at the house of Sir James Knowles, founder of the Metaphysical Society and of the Nineteenth Century. The name was at once adopted by friend and foe.

### Aspen-leaf

It is doubtful whether, outside poetry, people ever "tremble like an aspen-leaf" nowadays. The more prosaic jelly is the accepted contemporary symbol. Anyone who has watched a fine specimen of *populus tremula* on a still night will easily understand how it must have appealed to our country-dwelling ancestors as an emblem of perpetual motion. Danish has the corresponding expression "skjælve som et aspelov," and Ludwig renders Ger. "Er zittert wie ein aspenlaub"<sup>1</sup> by "he trembles like an aspen-leaf; he shakes like a wet cat; he trembles or quakes for fear." French, having given the name *tremble* to the tree itself, is reduced to saying "trembler comme une feuille."

The association is now always with fear, but in earlier times the *aspen-leaf* was symbolical of any quivering movement. Shakespeare uses it in the generally accepted sense when he makes the Hostess, who "cannot abide swaggerers," shake "an't were an aspen-leaf" (2 Henry IV, 11, 4); but in the only other passage in which it occurs, the simile is of quite another kind.

Oh! had the monster seen those lily hands  
Tremble like aspen-leaves upon a lute  
And make the silken strings delight to kiss them,  
He would not then have touched them for his life.

(Titus Andronicus, 11, 5.)

<sup>1</sup> The name of the tree is now spelt *espe*; it is also called *zitterpappel*, tremble-poplar.

## BATTELS

In the 16th century the female tongue was likened to an *aspen-leaf*. The Oxford Dictionary quotes from Sir Thomas More, "If they (women) myghte be suffred to begin ones in the congregacion to fal in disputing, those aspen-leaves of theirs would never leave waggyng."<sup>1</sup> At a much earlier date it was even possible to "quake like an aspen-leaf" with anger. At the conclusion of the Friar's Tale, in which a Summoner plays a very unedifying part:

This Somonour in his styropes hye stood  
Upon this Frere his herte was so wood,<sup>2</sup>  
That lyk an aspen-leef he quook for ire.

(Chaucer, D 1665)

The name *aspen*, now given to the tree, for *asp*, is due to the frequent occurrence of *aspen-leaf*, in which the first element is either the Anglo-Saxon genitive, as in *aspan-rind*, aspen-bark, or else an adjectival formation of the same type as *oaken*, *beechen*, etc. Both *asp* and *aps*<sup>3</sup> are still used in dialect, and Richard Jefferies tells us that woodmen always say *asp*, not *aspen*.

We have something like it in *linden*, the popularity of which in suburban villa nomenclature started in the early 19th century with the fashionable enthusiasm for German poetry and its inevitable *lindenbaum* or lime-tree. The German name for the tree is *linde*, the dative plural of which is familiar in the Berlin street-name "Unter den Linden." The Anglo-Saxon was *lind*, surviving in Lyndhurst and other place-names, but this has not been current English for centuries.

## Battels

The older universities and the public schools are conservative institutions. It is archæologically, as well as physically,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. xiv 34.

<sup>2</sup> Mad, enraged. This obsolete word is one origin of the surname *Wood*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *waps* for *wasps*. *Aps* is the origin of the surname *Appes*.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

pleasant to be refreshed on a hot evening with a "stoup" of ale fetched from the "buttery" *Battels* is applied at Oxford to all expenses beyond tutor's fees. At Eton it was used in the 18th century of extras in the way of "tuck." At Winchester *battlings* are a special allowance of a shilling a week, a survival of an old grant given for providing food on fast-days. The exact original sense of the Oxford *battels* is a matter of dispute, but it seems likely that the following definition is about correct: "*bathl* to grow fat or lusty; whence most properly to battle in the University of Oxford is taken for to run on to exceedings above the ordinary stint (= allowance) of the appointed commons" (Phillips).

*Battel* or *battle* is a corruption of *batten*, a word which perhaps owes its survival in the speech of the fervent reformer to the fact that it rhymes with *fatten*. It is especially used of those who invest their savings, more picturesquely described by Mr. Kirkwood, M.P., as "the parasites who fatten on the toil of the worker like slugs on a cabbage." This quotation, if correctly reported, is interesting as being perhaps the first recorded example of a Socialist orator rejecting *batten* in favour of its more commonplace rhyme.

The origin of *batten* is Old Norse *batna*, to improve, get "better," from the root *bat*, of which our *better* is a comparative. In English both *batten* and *batle* were used chiefly of feeding plentifully (transitive or intransitive), and especially applied to cattle.

Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night.

(Lycidas, l. 29.)

A parallel to the sense and formation is Dan. *gjode*, to fatten cattle, from *god*, good. The application to people is well exemplified by Cotgrave, who has "*une fille bien advenue*: well proved, well grown, well come on, well prospered; well batned, or batled."

In the sense of "tuck," the Oxford Dictionary has as early examples only Anglo-Latin quotations dating from 1557.

## BEEFEATER

A much earlier instance, from the Memorials of Fountains Abbey,<sup>1</sup> seems to show that the word was not originally restricted to university use. One day in 1447 Thomas Swynton, the monk who attended to most of the outside affairs of the Abbey, paid a business visit to Ripon, and there felt the need of reasonable liquid refreshment to the extent of 2½d. Consequently we find in his account-book, "In batell apud Ripon vidz in vino, iud. ob."

## Beefeater

Just now newspapers are tempting the capricious appetite of the jaded cross-word solver with a new diversion entitled "Do you know?" or "Can you say?" The questions set cover the whole range of human knowledge, and the appended answers contain much that is impressive. It is inevitable that "etymology" should enter into these popular *questionnaires*, and that many etymological ghosts, insecurely laid, should once more squeak and gibber in the Press. Our old friend *cabal* has naturally turned up with Clifford, Ashley and Co. forming his spectral train, nor is one surprised to find once more the pronouncement that *beefeater* is "a corruption of the French word *buffetier*, server at the *buffet*."

This myth dates from about the end of the 18th century. Archdeacon Todd, re-editing Johnson's Dictionary in 1818, printed the following fantasy: "Mr. Steevens<sup>2</sup> derives it thus: '*Beefeater* may come from *buffetier*,<sup>3</sup> one who attends at the sideboard, which was anciently placed in a *beaufet*.'<sup>4</sup> The business of the *beefeaters* was, and perhaps is still, to

<sup>1</sup> Vol. 3, Surtees Society (1918).

<sup>2</sup> George Steevens (1736-1800), commentator on Shakespeare.

<sup>3</sup> When Steevens wrote, no French word *buffetier* was known. It has since been discovered in Old French, but it meant a dealer in wine and vinegar, also apparently in one case a tub-washer.

<sup>4</sup> This English perversion of *buffet* was used in the 18th century for a china-cupboard.



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attend the King at meals. This derivation is corroborated by the circumstance of the *beefeaters* having a hasp suspended to their belts for the reception of keys" Elizabeth Penrose, the author of *Mrs Markham's History of England* (1823), the sale of which was prodigious, is responsible for the wide diffusion of this fiction: "Mrs. M.: 'You have also seen how the men were dressed Don't you remember the *beef-eaters* you saw in London? They wear the same kind of dress that was worn by Henry the Eighth's *beef-eaters*.' Mary '*Beef-eaters*, mamma! I never heard such a comical name.' Mrs M 'It is a strange corruption of a very plain word, *buffeter*, a person who waits at a *buffet*, or sideboard.'"

Not only Richard, George and little Mary, who, "though she was very young, seated herself on a footstool at Mrs. Markham's feet and listened with great attention," but even scholars like Trench and Max Muller eagerly swallowed this apparition, "hasp" and all, and Steevens's wild guess joined the company of those popular fictions usually described as "well-known facts" At first there were some doubters. The eminent medievalist, Sir Francis Palgrave, reflecting that the *beefeaters* were not table attendants, but archers,<sup>1</sup> later halberdiers, was moved to put forward a rival etymology. A type of halberd called in French a *langue-de-bœuf*, i.e. ox-tongue, in allusion to the shape of its blade, was introduced into Mid. English as *longe-de-bef* Palgrave ingeniously (or ingenuously) suggested that "As from halbert and musket are derived halberteer and musketeer, so *longe-de-befeteer* would be formed from *longe-de-bef*, and might afterwards be abbreviated into *befeteer*" Thus was word-history written by the learned in 1836.

*Beefeater*, incredible as it may appear, means "eater of beef", cf. Ger. "*bratenfresser*: a great beef-eater" (Ludwig). In the 16th century the compound had two special meanings: (1) a burly Englishman, as compared with less fav-

<sup>1</sup> "*Archer* an archer, or bowman, also a yeoman of the (king's) gard" (Cotgrave).

## BEEFEATER

oured races, (2) a pampered menial. The Yeoman of the Guard was both "Pouche-beef<sup>1</sup> lubber,"<sup>2</sup> for an over-fed manservant, occurs in Chaloner's translation of *The Praise of Folly* (1549). "Powder-beef slave" is in the old play, *Wily Beguiled* (1606). In Marston's *Histriomastix* (printed in 1610) the hero thus apostrophizes his "impudent, audacious serving-men":

Begone yee greedy beef-eaters; y'are best  
The Callis cormorants from Dover roade  
Are not so chargeable as you to feed

As a nickname for the Yeomen of the Guard and the Tower warders *beefeater* is well attested in the 17th century. The association appears in the following flippancy<sup>3</sup> of that period:

That Thou wilt be pleased to look on the grief  
Of the King's old servants and send them relief,  
Restore to the Yeomen o' the Guard chimes of beef;  
Te rogamus audi nos!

Miège, in his *French-English Dictionary* (1688), tells us: "C'est ainsi qu'on appelle par déuision les Yeomen of the Gard dans la Cour d'Angleterre, qui sont des gardes à peu près comme les cent Suisses en Fiance. Et on leur donne ce nom-là, parce qu'à la Cour ils ne vivent que de bœuf, par opposition à ces collèges d'Angleterre, où les écoliers ne mangent que du mouton." Bailey (1736) has "*beefeaters*: a nickname given the Yeomen of the Guard, because their commons is beef, when on waiting." The Queen of the Blue-stockings (see p. 11) writes (1745), "I can eat more buttered roll in a morning than a great girl at a boarding-school, and more beef at dinner than a Yeoman of the Guards."

<sup>1</sup> Powder(ed)-beef was salt beef, a stock article of diet in the days when the butcher did not call regularly.

<sup>2</sup> Lubber was once used of a household drudge. Hence Milton's lubber-fiend, i. e. Lob-lie-by-the-fire (*Allegro*, l. 110).

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in *Notes and Queries*.

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We need not perhaps attach great importance to the special rations attributed to the Yeomen of the Guard. Beef has always been symbolical of a generous diet producing the "bluff King Hal" type of physique. There is even a legend of an English general who rallied his wavering troops with the burning words, "Are you Englishmen, who eat beef, going to be licked by a lot of damned foreigners, who live on oranges?"

*Beefeater*, serving-man, is a variation on a much earlier name reflecting the original conception of domestic service as a state in which satisfaction of the elementary needs is assured. Henry II, in his traditional outburst against Becket, spoke of his knights as "the cowards that eat my bread." In the Laws of King Ethelbert, Anglo-Sax. *hlāfeta*, loaf-eater, is used of a household servant, one who eats his master's bread. The master himself was the *hlāford*, for *hlāf-weard*, loaf-ward, and the mistress was the *hlāfdige*, loaf-kneader, the second element being cognate with *dough*. These gave us *lord* and *lady* and the Scottish *laird* and *leddy*. The history of these two ancient titles, and of the ups and downs they have experienced, is fascinating, but too long to be included here. It is, however, interesting to note that, as a correlative to *lady*, *lord* is now, except in one specific sense or when preceded by *land-*, supplanted by *gentleman*.

*Lordly* is a very old word. It has always connoted majesty, often with a tinge of arrogance, and occasionally something worse, cf. "drunk as a lord." Oddly used by Coverdale on the occasion when Jael brought out the best china (Judges v. 25), it has been retained by the Authorized and Revised Versions. This "lordly dish" represents the *phala principum* of the Vulgate. *Ladylike*, on the other hand, is comparatively modern, and, so far as the Oxford Dictionary's records go, has always been associated with a gentle dignity. But the word is somewhat older than those records, and once had a sense more intimately connected

## BLACKMAIL

with that of *lordly* Cooper explains Ovid's *conjunx imperiosa* as "a ladylike wife that will be obeyed."

### Blackmail

An interested foreigner, trying to glean from the daily Press some idea of "England, its people, polity and pursuits," might be excused for coming to the conclusion that one of the chief interests of the more leisured class is *blackmail*, active or passive <sup>1</sup> The word and the thing are now so common, that it is difficult to realize that the practice, at any rate in its most efficient form, is essentially a contemporary feature of social progress The Oxford Dictionary's first quotation for *blackmail* in a sense approaching that now current is from Macaulay's essay on Clive The Dictionary's definition, formulated in 1888, runs, "any payment extorted by intimidation or pressure, or levied by unprincipled officials, critics, journalists, etc., upon those whom they have it in their power to help or injure" If this definition were to be rewritten in the light of the latest research, I imagine that the "officials, critics and journalists" would take second place, and the "etc" would come into their own The scale of the science has also been so intelligently enlarged that the trifling baksheesh with which the 19th-century blackmailer was satisfied would hardly pay the postal expenses of a modern operator.

So far as the Oxford Dictionary records go, it would seem that the practice of extorting money by the threat of damaging publicity was first developed in the United States. At any rate, the earliest quotation for the word *blackmailer* is from the New York Herald (1868) English travellers in the past have mostly used it in reference to the tribute levied by Arab sheikhs and other Eastern potentates for permission to pass through their territory unharmed.

<sup>1</sup> This article appeared in the Observer at a time when two amazing blackmail cases filled the greater part of the daily papers.

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There is a very considerable gap between the contemporary applications of the word and its earliest use as a respectable legal term. Like so much of our administrative vocabulary, *mail* is a Viking word. It is found in various forms in all the Teutonic languages (Old Norse *māl*, Anglo-Sax *mæthel*, Old High Ger. *mahal*, Goth. *mathl*), with the general idea of meeting, speech, agreement, contract, etc., and is copiously recorded in English, from the 11th century onward, in the sense of payment, tax, rent. But it has always been especially a North Country word, preserving its proper sense only in Scotland, where a rent-paying tenant is still in some districts a *mailer*.

There are also compounds descriptive of the type of tenancy, such as *grass-mail* and *land-mail*, or of the method of payment, such as *silver-mail* and *black-mail*. We do not know the original meaning of the latter. Camden conjectured that the *black* referred to copper coin, and the fact that we find *white-rent* used as equivalent to *silver-mail* lends some plausibility to this view. But the accepted legal sense of *black-mail* was, according to the Oxford Dictionary, "rent reserved in labour, produce, etc., as distinguished from *white-rents*, which were reserved in *white money*, or silver."

Such dues usually come to be regarded as oppressive and extortionate, and the forbidding adjective *black* would not help to make the word popular. So it was adopted, no doubt by the victims, as the name for the tribute exacted from farmers and landholders by the freebooters of the Border and the Highland chiefs neighbouring on the Lowlands. The system was, compared with modern black-mailing, quite straight business. The bandit undertook, in consideration of an annual contribution, to guarantee the contributor against the exactions of all other bandits. If he failed to do so, he felt as humiliated as the Arab chief who allows travellers who have paid him for safe-conduct to be massacred by marauders trespassing on his territory. In other words, there was a *quid pro quo*, and the blackmailer did

## BLUE-STOCKING

not adopt towards his public the "heads I win, tails you lose" policy of a modern trust or trade union

The contemporary currency of the word remains a problem. As a Highland industry *blackmail* died out after the Forty-five, and in England much earlier. Rose Bradwardine informed Edward Waverley that not the boldest Highland cateran would "steal a hoof from anyone that pays blackmail to Vich Ian Vohi," and, in reply to his puzzled "And what is blackmail?" gave him the classic definition of the term: "a sort of protection-money that Low-country gentlemen and heritors, lying near the Highlands, pay to some Highland chief, that he may neither do them harm himself, nor suffer it to be done to them by others" (Waverley, ch. 15). But Scott, writing in 1829, found it necessary to add one of his historical Notes on the subject. It is quite probable that the revival of this archaic word was due, like that of so many others, to the popularity of the Waverley Novels.

### Blue-stockings

There seems to be some natural connection between learned ladies and blueness, for it was in the famous "Chambre bleue" of the Hôtel de Rambouillet that Catherine de Vivonne, the "Queen of the *Précieuses*," initiated, soon after 1600, that civilizing campaign which was repeated in London a century and a half later by Elizabeth Montagu, the "Queen of the Blue-stockings." The term was soon adopted in French as *bas bleu* and in German as *blaustrumpf*. From German it passed into Danish as *blaastrømpe*.<sup>1</sup> In all these languages, as in English, it is depreciatory, and

<sup>1</sup> I append, *pour mémoire*, the following note, translated from Falk and Torp's *Norwegisch-Danisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, which differs altogether from the usually accepted view "From a learned society of both sexes, originally founded at Venice under the name *della calza* (= of the hose); it came in 1590 to Paris, in 1780 to England; in Germany the word appears at the end of the 17th century." I do not know on what evidence this series of statements rests.

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tends, with the attainment of sexual equality, to fall into disuse.

There is pretty general agreement as to the description having first been applied to Benjamin Stillingfleet, a frequenter of Mrs Montagu's circle, who had discarded the black silk of fashion for the blue worsted of a blameless life. There is an early allusion to these garments in one of Mrs Montagu's letters (1757)

A nickname of this kind is seldom given without some subsidiary reason. The *Black and Tans*, who assisted the Royal Irish Constabulary after World War I, were so called from wearing khaki coats and black caps, but they would never have received the popular nickname if there had not already existed, in the neighbourhood of Limerick, a famous hunt called the *Black and Tan*. So also *blackguard*, traditionally from the "kitchen squad" of a great man's household, e.g. "A lousy slave, that within this twenty years rode with the black guard in the Duke's carriage, 'mongst spits and dripping-pans" (Webster, *The White Devil*), apparently contains an allusion to some military corps as to which history is silent. In 1578 a woman was murdered in London by the *black guard*, in connection with which murder "certain soldiers" were executed. Stanyhurst, in his amazing translation of the *Aeneid* (1582), has "Thee blackgarde marching dooth wurck, in path way, ther harvest" to render Virgil's description of the ants

In nigrum campis agmen, praedamque per herbas  
Convectant calle angusto

(*Aeneid*, iv, 404 )

Similarly the blue stockings of Mr. Benjamin Stillingfleet would hardly have struck the popular fancy so much, if *blue-stockings* had not at an earlier date been contemptuously associated with mean and puritan<sup>1</sup> garb. It is curious that

<sup>1</sup> Blue was also the traditional colour of the serving-man's livery (*Taming of the Shrew*, iv, 1) , hence perhaps also applied to other dependents, cf. *bluegown*, *almsman*, *Bluecoat School*, charity school.

## BONFIRE

Ger. *blaustrumpf* also, before its readoption from English, had a contemptuous sense. In the 17th and 18th centuries it was applied, as still in dialect, to an informer or calumniator, from the blue stockings formerly worn by the lower officers of the law. "*Der hollische blaustrumpf*" is a name given by Schiller to Satan (*Die Räuber*, II, 3). We may compare the London slang *bluebottle*, policeman (?obsolete), which has good Shakespearean authority (2 Henry IV, v. 4).

## Bonfire

It may be doubted whether there was ever a worse etymologist than Dr. Johnson. He was a good classic, but completely ignorant of the earlier history of the Teutonic languages. So he derived *ache* (Anglo-Sax *acan*) from Gr. *ἄχος* and thus permanently distorted its spelling (for *ake*). *Anthem* (Anglo-Sax *antefn*, from Greco-Lat. *antiphona*), he connected with Gr. *ἄνθρμπος*, affirming that it "should therefore be written *anthymn*."

For *bonfire* Johnson gives an etymology from Fr. *bon*, good, and *fire*. This he no doubt took from the *Etymologicon* (1671) of Stephen Skinner, which was his chief authority for derivations. In Skinner we read "*bone-fire*: ignis festus, q.d. bonus, vel bene ominatus, ignis, Fr *un bon feu*." It may be that the festive sense of *bonfire* (cf Fr *feu de joie*, Ger. *freudenfeuer*) has been affected by association with *bon* and *bonus*, but the older form of *bonfire* was *bone-fire* or *bane-fire*, explained by the *Catholicon Anglicum* (1483) as *ignis osium*.

The form *bonefire* survived into the 18th century. The practice probably goes back to heathen<sup>1</sup> times, and is especially associated with Midsummer Eve (cf Ger. *Johannisfeuer*):

<sup>1</sup>The earliest authorities regard the *bone-fire* as a device against dragons. "Adversus hanc (sc animalia) ergo hujusmodi inventum est remedium, ut videlicet rogos ex ossibus construeretur et ita fumus hujusmodi animalia fugaret" (Belithus, in *Vigil. S. Joan.*).



## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

"For the annual midsummer *banefire* or *bonfire* in the burgh of Hawick, old bones were regularly collected and stored up, down to c. 1800" (Oxford Dictionary). This must have been due to the strength of tradition, for bones do not burn particularly well. In Old French we find *feu d'os*. Hexham's Dutch Dictionary (1660) has "*bone-fire*: een been-vier, dat is, als men victorie brandt," apparently alluding to the practice of burning the dead on the won field:

Now will the Christian miscreants<sup>1</sup> be glad,  
Ringing with joy their superstitious bells  
And making bonfires for my overthrow  
But, ere I die, those foul idolaters  
Shall make me bonfires with their filthy bones.

(Marlowe, 1 Tamburlaine the Great, III, 3).

In 16th-century English *bonfire* was regularly used to render Lat *pyra* and *rogus*. Where Virgil, describing the death of Dido, has "*altos conscendit furibunda rogos*" (Aeneid, IV, 645), Stanyhurst (1582) translates "Madlye she scaleth thee top of her *banefyers*." Sir Thomas Browne describes cremation as a "*sepulchrall bonfire*." With the religious persecutions of the Reformation period *bonfire* assumed a special sense, and was often alliteratively connected with the name of Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London († 1569). With Gunpowder Plot (1605) the *bonfire* became what it is now, i.e. a blaze emblematical of commemoration, jollification and immolation combined.

### Bourgeois

Mr Stanley Baldwin (now Earl Baldwin), when Prime Minister, once caused some amusement in the House by commenting on the current use, in some circles, of the word *bourgeois* as an invective term. He suggested that its choice might be due to that predilection which democracy sometimes shows for abusive terms beginning with *b*-.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 1, n. 1.

## BOURGEOIS

So far as I have observed, the depreciatory sense of *bourgeois* obtains in only three classes, which may roughly be said to inhabit the Beau-monde, Bohemia, and Bolshevia, i.e. the regions in which hard work is regarded with least enthusiasm. To these classes a *bourgeois* is, according to the exact point of view, a sinister or a comic figure. To the Beau-monde he is a person of inferior manners, to the Bohemian a narrow-minded philistine, to the Bolshevik an embryo capitalist. I have never heard a working-man, as distinct from a "Labour man," use the word.

There is, however, nothing sinister or comic about the Bourgeois de Calais, immortalized in history, literature and art, nor were the "burgesses" of London, champions of civic rights and founders of the British Empire, always figures of fun. When Corneille wishes to paint the dignity of a citizen of Rome, he makes Nicomède say.

Ne savez-vous plus qu'il n'est princes ni rois  
Qu'elle daigne égaler à ses moindres bourgeois ?

When, in the latter part of the 17th century, the French nobility abdicated its position and forsook its duties in order to dance attendance at the royal court, it naturally began to conceive a contempt for all that was plain, simple and honest. So the word *bourgeois*, which suggested these qualities, fell on evil days. In *Les Femmes Savantes*, the idiot Bélise, who, if she had lived now, would be dividing her time between the Beau-monde, Bohemia and diluted Bolshevism, doubts whether there can be "un esprit composé d'atomes plus bourgeois" than her plain-spoken brother Chrysale. By the time of the Revolution the word had so completely lost caste that it had no chance at all against the synonymous *citoyen*, when it became a question of selecting a name to replace that of "sujet du roi." Logically, the unhappy fate of *bourgeois*, the verbal victim of the "idle rich," should have excited the sympathy of the Republicans rather than their derision.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

The next chapter in the history of the word was written by the young French writers and artists of the early 19th century, whose chief object in life was to "épater le bourgeois," i.e. to bewilder or shock the plain middle-class man, a pastime which is not without attraction for the young writers and artists of the 20th century. Bohemia does not hate the Beau-monde—in fact, it sometimes feels flattered at being asked to appear in gilded halls—but it is merciless to the *bourgeois*, a being unworthy even, according to one of Coppée's old Bohemians, of the guillotine, and who, in the next revolution, is to be put to death by means of "la machine à coups de pied dans le derrière."

The third and latest misuse of the word *bourgeois* belongs, if I may use a current imbecility, to the "class-conscious" vocabulary which advanced "Labour" has recently borrowed from Moscow, and which Moscow had borrowed, along with *proletariat*,<sup>1</sup> from French Communism. And this reminds me that I have never heard a working-man utter the word *proletariat*. It is not many years since I heard from an elderly labourer, in altercation with a better-dressed opponent, the withering remark, "You're no Englishman; you're only some damned sort of a foreigner." This crude, narrow-minded mentality somehow pleases me better than the borrowing of misunderstood foreign terms with which to assail one's fellow-countrymen.

The first word that the Roman soldiers picked up from the Teutons was *burg*, used in the sense of *castrum*, and later applied to the fortified town of which a castle was often the nucleus. It is very common in English (*borough*, *burgh*, *bury*), German (*burg*), and Dutch (*burg*). The Roman soldiers took it to Gaul as *bourg*, and the earliest *bourgeois* were the sturdy class that threw off the yoke of villeinage and set up fortified cities secure from feudal tyranny.

<sup>1</sup> "The wot?" exclaimed his father. 'The proletariat.' 'Wot's that?' 'You know. The workin' class.' 'Well, why the 'ell can't you say workin' class?'" (St. John G. Ervine, *Alice and a Family*.)

## Carfax

The adjective *trivial* is from Lat. "*trivialis*: common, used or taught in high ways, of no estimation" (Cooper), from *trivium*, the point of meeting of three ways, also "where common recourse of people is" (*ibid*). It has probably also been affected by a contemptuous attitude towards the *trivium*, the medieval three-way curriculum, viz. grammar, logic and rhetoric

Latin also had *quadrivium*, the point of meeting of four ways, or what we should now commonly understand by the *cross-roads*. It is quite a shock to find how recent is the latter compound. The Oxford Dictionary has no record earlier than 1812, so that apparently, in medieval times, some other term must have been used in connection with "dirty work" or the burial of suicides

A dozen men sat on his corpse  
To find out why he died,  
And they buried Ben in four cross-roads,  
With a stake in his inside

(Hood, Faithless Nellie Gray.)

This is more easily understood, if we remember that the sense we attach to *road* is no older than Shakespeare (see p. 87). Much earlier than *cross-roads* is *cross-way*, the lurking-place of footpads and ghosts

Yonder shines Aurora's harbinger,  
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,  
Troop home to churchyards, damned spirits all,  
That in cross-ways and floods have burial

(Midsummer Night's Dream, III, 2)

Of equal antiquity with *cross-way* was *carfour*, borrowed from Fr. *carrefour*, which represents a Vulgar Lat. *quadrifurcum*, four-fork, substituted for the classical *quadrivium*. This was in general use up to the 18th century, the Oxford Dictionary's last record being "A sort of *carfour* at Chancery Lane end," from North's Examen (1734). More common was the plural form *carfoukes*, representing the Old Fr. *carrefours*. The London "*carfuku del ledenhalle*" is men-

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

tioned in the Liber Albus (1357). At one time in general use, it gradually became obsolete. At present, so far as I know, the word is preserved only at Oxford, Exeter and Horsham<sup>1</sup>. Already by the 17th century it was especially associated with the university town "*carfax* in Oxford: *quadrivium*" (Littleton).

### Cheesemonger

In determining the approximate date of a word's first appearance dictionaries use chiefly literary sources. Our early vernacular literature consists largely of poetry, drama and chronicle. The *cheesemonger* is not essentially poetic or dramatic, and it happens that no representative of the calling has ever headed a rebellion. Hence it is not surprising that the Oxford Dictionary's first record of the word dates from the 16th century. But to the authorities the *cheesemonger* was a tax-paying unit, and an examination of early Pipe Rolls reveals the name of Baldwin le Chese-mangere as early as 1185-6, so that one may infer the very probable existence of the compound in Anglo-Saxon, which borrowed both *cheese* and *monger* from Latin.

Rome taught Europe not only the arts of war and peace, but also the tricks of trade. Lat. *mercatus*, market (from *merx*, *merc-*, merchandise), was adopted by all the Teutonic languages, though our English form probably came rather late and via Old French. *Merchant*, earlier *marchant*, was borrowed from French during the early Mid. English period, but long before this two colloquial Latin names for a dealer had been acquired by the Teutonic languages.

The first is *mango*, not at all a nice word. Cooper defines it as "a baude that paynteth and pampereth up boyes, women or servauntes to make them seeme the trimmer, thereby to sell them the deerer, an horse coarser<sup>2</sup> that

<sup>1</sup> But the late J. S. Fletcher, the novelist, once told me that there is a *carfax* in his native Yorkshire village, the name of which I have forgotten.

<sup>2</sup> *Horse-courser*, dealer in horses, now replaced by *horse-coper*, the second element of which is from Dutch *koop*, to buy.

## CHEESEMONGER

pampræth and trimmeth his horses for the same purpose " Provided with the Teutonic agential suffix *-ari*, it gave Anglo-Sax. *mangere*, a 'merchant, now *monger* Where Wyclif writes, "eftsones the kyngdam of hevenes is lic to a man marchaunt, seekyng good margarytis," the Anglo-Saxon translation has "eft is heofena rice gelic tham mangere, the sohte that gode meregrot" (Matt. xiii. 45).

Trade-names in *-monger* are rather numerous, and it is odd that they have not made a larger contribution to our surname list The only one at all common is *Iremonger* or *Ironmonger*, well represented all over England. A partial explanation may be that this name represents two trades, viz. *ironmonger*, earlier also *isen-manger*, whence the variants *Icsmonger*, *Isemonger*, and *eyren-manger*, egg<sup>1</sup>-merchant.

At the Renaissance *-monger* fell into disrepute. It had already been used in the 13th century to form a compound expressing the most unpleasant sense of Lat *mango*. In the 16th century it became definitely contemptuous, and since then it has been constantly used in the manufacture of new and disparaging epithets One of the earliest of these is *massmonger*, an offensive description of a Roman Catholic. Shakespeare probably coined *newsmonger*. Prince Hal speaks of "smiling pick-thanks<sup>2</sup> and base newsmongers" (1 Henry IV, iii, 2). The historian of the future, consulting the newspaper files of the past, will be interested to find *scaremonger* applied to Lord Roberts before World War I, and *warmonger* to Mr Winston Churchill before World War II. The humble compiler of this volume was once described by a London daily as "the most entertaining of living wordmongers."

<sup>1</sup> *Egg* is an Old Norse word which has supplanted the native *ey*.

<sup>2</sup> One who curries favour, a tale-bearer. *Pick-* is a favourite element in disparaging compounds of this type, e.g. *pickpenny*, miser, was a medieval nickname, *pickpurse* is in Chaucer, *pickharness*, stripper of the slain, is in Piers Plowman *Picklock*, burglar, and *pickpocket* are both booked for the early 16th century, and are probably much older in colloquial use.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

The other Latin word is "*caupo*: a hucster, a taverner, a victualer, an innekeeper" (Cooper), also an undesirable character, according to Horace, who describes him as *perfidus*. This word was much more successful than *mango*. The latter is now widely represented in English only, while *caupo* is regarded as the foundation-stone of the whole Teutonic commercial vocabulary. In Anglo-Saxon we find *cēap*, trade, price, whence Mid Eng. *good cheap* (cf. Fr. *bon marché*), now shortened to *cheap*; *cēapmon*, dealer, whence our common surname *Chapman* and our colloquial *chap*; *cēapstow*, market-place, now *Chepstow*; and *cēaping*, whence our numerous *Chippings*: "And he, gon out about the thridde hour, saw other stondynge ydil in the chepyng" (Wyclif, Matt. xx. 3). Other related words are *chaffer* (p. 161, n. 1) and *chop*, in "to chop and change" and "to chop logic," both now misunderstood. The verb (cf. Ger *kaufen*, Dutch *koopen*) is in all the Teutonic languages, with numerous derivatives, and has even penetrated into Slavonic.

It is curious that neither *mango* nor *caupo* has any descendants in the Romance languages. They appear to have been what Dr. Johnson calls "very low" words, more familiar to the soldier than to the citizen, but of a form more easily picked up by the Teuton savages than longer and more polite descriptions. Old High Ger *choufo*, now elaborated into *kaufmann*, was probably adopted not later than the 2nd century A D. It may be conjectured that both *caupo* and *mango* were used in the Imperial armies somewhat in the sense of sutler, camp-follower.

## Clodhopper

"The common ploughman," said Adam Smith (1776), the "father of political economy," "though generally regarded as a pattern of stupidity and ignorance, is seldom defective in his judgment and discretion." "Since I have worked with farm-labourers," said Sir Ian Hamilton (1927),

## CLODHOPPER

"I take off my hat to them every day They are the only folk in this country who could make both ends meet on a desert island." It is characteristic of human stupidity that the one "skilled man" who is really indispensable is an object of contempt to the little street-bred people.

If a man has a grudging, surly disposition, we call him *churlish*, from *churl*, peasant, which is Anglo-Sax. *ceorl*, a free man of the lowest class. If his manners are bad we call him *boorish*. Although (*ge*)*būr*, properly a dweller in a "bower," is Anglo-Saxon and survives in *neighbour* (from *nigh*), there is a gap in its English history. After the Conquest it gave way to the Norman term *vilain*, and the word was probably reintroduced in the 15th or 16th century from the cognate Dutch *boer*, still used, in the form *bor*, by an East Anglian like Ham Peggotty as a friendly mode of address. In early use *boor* was almost exclusively applied to Dutchmen and Germans. On May 19th, 1660, Pepys saw, in a "little drinking house" not far from The Hague, "many Dutch boors eating of fish in a boorish manner," no doubt a horrid sight.

If a man is awkward and unpolished, we describe him as *clownish*, from a word which originally simply meant rustic. *Clown* is of obscure origin, but certainly cognate with a number of words in the other Teutonic languages all meaning something like lump, clod. The pantomime *clown* is a blend of the comic countryman with one of the stock characters of Italian comedy.

Since the 16th century the countryman has been called a *clod*,<sup>1</sup> along with the elaborations *clodpate* and *clodpoll*. The 17th century<sup>2</sup> seems to have originated *clodhopper*, later

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the similar use of the cognate Ger. *klotz*.

<sup>2</sup> To the same century belong the similar formations *moss-trooper*, Border bandit, and *bog-trotter*, "wild" Irishman. *Moss-troopers* are described in Blount's Law Dictionary (1691) as "a rebellious sort of malefactors in the north of England, that live by robbery and rapine; not unlike the Tories of Ireland, the Buccaneers in Jamaica, or Bandits in Italy."



## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

supplied with the pleasing alternative *chawbacon*. The still earlier *bumpkin*, of uncertain etymology,<sup>1</sup> is shown by the diminutive suffix to be probably of Dutch origin

All these native names for the most useful member of the community are surpassed in opprobriousness by *villain*. The Fr *vilain* was, as the name implies, originally a serf attached to a *ville*,<sup>2</sup> i.e. the villa or country estate of one of the "upper classes." Old French literature is full of stories illustrating the churlishness, boorishness and clownishness, in fact the villainy, of the *vilain*.<sup>3</sup> Cotgrave, in his Dictionary, finds room for a dozen proverbs supporting the same thesis, and his definition of the word itself is one of his choicest efforts. "*vilain*: a villaine, slave, bondman, servile tenant; hence also, a churle, carle, boore, clowne and, a miser, micher, pinchpennie, penny-father, and, a knave, rascall, varlet, filthie fellow, any base-humored, ill-borne and worse-bred hinde, cullion, or clusterfist"

### Close-quarters

From Lat. *claudere*, *claus-*, to shut, Old French inherited a verb *clore*, of which some fragments still survive. Its past participle *clos* became our *close*, which still means shut, closed, in "close season," "close-fisted" (opposite of "openhanded"), etc. In late Mid English it developed the sense of near, apparently via that of having all intervening spaces shut or closed. The military to "close up" is an illustration of the same idea. Similarly to "close with" (an enemy or an offer) is to obliterate a gap, literal or theoretical. The contact of the two notions also appears in the fact that both *close* and *near* are used in the sense of stingy. In Shakespeare's use of *close* the original sense of "shutness" is much more fully exemplified than the derived sense of proximity.

<sup>1</sup> It is probably from Dutch *boom*, tree, log.

<sup>2</sup> For the sense-development cf. our word *town*, originally an enclosure, a homestead

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the French adjective *vilain*, ugly.

## COCKSURE

In modern English the latter sense is much the more frequent, and this fact is responsible for our altered and, strictly speaking, erroneous use of *close-quarters*.

Elizabethan sea-fights were carried on at very short range and usually ended in an attack by boarders. For defence against such an attack ships were provided with *close-fights*, defined (1627) by Captain John Smith as "small ledges of wood laid crosse one another like the grates of iron in a prisons window, betwixt the maine mast and the fore mast, and are called gratings." In this nautical "pill-box" the last stand was made. The *close-fights*, or simply *fights*, were only put up when an engagement was imminent:

Clap on more sails; pursue, up with your fights;  
Give fire, she is my prize, or oceanwhelm them all!  
(Merry Wives, II, 2.)

In the 18th century *close-fights* were called "*close-quarters*: cloisons fortes établies en travers d'un vaisseau, pour servir de retranchement et de défense en cas d'abordage" (Lescaulier, 1777). These *cloisons*,<sup>1</sup> or bulkheads,<sup>2</sup> were loop-holed for small-arm fire. "They are used as a place of retreat, when a ship is boarded by his adversary" (Falconer, 1771).

The point is that in *close-quarters* the adjective originally meant shut, barricaded, whereas in the modern "*at close quarters*" we give it the secondary sense of near, with a mistaken implication as to its real signification.

## Cocksure

The bird which the Americans, and some very delicate-minded English people, call a "rooster" has a reputation for sprightly arrogance, otherwise "cockiness." It is probable that the sense we now give to *cocksure* has been affected by

<sup>1</sup> Fr *cloison* is from Lat. *clausio-n-*, cf. *cloison étanche*, watertight bulkhead.

<sup>2</sup> The *bulk* of *bulkhead* is Old Norse *balkr*, beam.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

this association Few Englishmen have been more "cocky" than Macaulay, of whom Lord Melbourne is reported to have said, "I wish I was as cocksure of anything as Tom Macaulay is cocksure of everything." The association is unjustified, for, while *cocky* (or *cocksy*, *coxy*) is no older than the 18th century and has always been slangy and contemptuous, *cocksure* dates back almost to the Wars of the Roses, and was originally a dignified word, referring not to the subjective consciousness of being right or knowing better than other people, but to the objective fact of security, trustworthiness, etc. The *cocksure* man of the 16th century was not dogmatically assertive, he was armoured against fate "Whoso dwelleth under that secret thing, and help of the Lord, is cocksure for evermore" (Foxe).

If we trace the word back through the dictionaries, we find in Ash (1775) "*cocksure* (used in droll style) confident, having no doubt"; in Johnson (1755) "confidently certain, without fear or diffidence (a word of contempt)"; in Bailey (1736) "very sure", in Miège (1688) "qui est assuré de son fait." Hence we may infer that the current meaning of *cocksure* dates from about the middle of the 18th century. It may have been affected by the obsolete *cockish*, arrogant, which dropped out of use at about the same period.

Shakespeare uses *cocksure* only once, when he makes Gadshill say, "We steal as in a castle, cocksure. We have the receipt of fernseed,<sup>1</sup> we walk invisible" (1 Henry IV, 11, 1). Although this occurs in humorous dialogue, the sense is merely "in full security." Where Venus tells Aeneas—

Tibi reduces socios classemque relatum  
Nuntio, et in tutum versis Aquilonibus actam

(Aeneid, 1, 390)

Stanyhurst (1582) translates: "Thou seest al cocksure, thy flete, thy coompanie salved." The evidence of the Latin-

<sup>1</sup> Fernseed was once supposed to be invisible and to confer the power of invisibility.

## DEMOCRACY

English Dictionaries, from the 17th century onward, shows that *cocksure* was equivalent to *securus*, *tutus*

As it seems impossible to connect the compound with any sense of the monosyllable *cock*,<sup>1</sup> a bird (fig a tap, from its shape), a heap of hay, a small boat, I venture to put forward, but only as a timid conjecture, the theory that *cock* may be here an old substitute for *God*. Laws against blasphemy combined with natural reverence to eliminate the sacred name from fantastic oaths. The Frenchman substitutes *parbleu* for *par Dieu*. German has many strange compounds beginning with *Potz*-, an arbitrary perversion of *Gottes*. Ludwig gives various specimens of these "comical oaths" with such English renderings as "Gemini! bodikins! boblikins! udds-niggers! uddsbuddikins! gudds-bob! by cox-nouns! by cox-bones!" Several of these can be paralleled from Shakespeare, who also makes Petruchio swear "by Gog's wounds" (*Taming of the Shrew*, iii, 2). The substitution of *cock* for *God* is as old as Chaucer:

See how he nappeth! see how, for cokkes [*var. goddes*]  
bones!

As he wol falle fro his hors atones. (H 9.)

### Democracy

It was on April 2, 1917, that the late President Wilson issued his decree that "the world must be made safe for democracy." This having, presumably, been accomplished, it may be of interest to trace the history of the word and the related *demagogue*.

Gr. *δημος*, cognate with a Sanskrit root meaning divide, was originally the territory of a community. At Athens it was applied to a division of the tribe, and it was at Athens that *δημοκρατία*, people-rule, came into existence:

<sup>1</sup> The three main senses represent three quite distinct and unrelated words.

<sup>2</sup> This is a perversion of *jemury*, *juminy*, which is also a minced oath; like Ger. *jemine*, it is supposed to be for *Jesu Domine*. American *Gee! whiz!* belongs to the same class of euphemism.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

Thence to the famous orators repair,  
Those ancient whose resistless eloquence  
Wielded at will that fierce democracy.

(Paradise Regained, iv, 268.)

There is naturally little trace of the word, or of *demagogue*, in the Middle Ages. In fact, almost the only record of them before the Renaissance is in Nicole Oresme, a 14th-century French theologian and translator of Aristotle. It was not until the French Revolution that *democracy* ceased to be a mere literary word and became part of the political vocabulary. Wilkes suggested that *mobocracy* was a better description of the Revolutionary Government. Byron, in his Diary (1821), defined *democracy* as "an aristocracy of blackguards." With these views we may compare Daniel Webster's "people's government, made for the people, made by the people, and answerable to the people" (1830), and Lincoln's famous speech at Gettysburg (1863), in which he declared that "government of the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." If we correct this enthusiasm with Dean Inge's remark that "there is a great deal to be said for democracy, but to worship it is a provincialism and quite out-of-date," the subject may be regarded as exhausted.

Unlike *δημοκρατία*, which merely meant popular government, the related *δημαγωγός* was usually contemptuous and had in Greek the sense of mob-leader. Oresme has "*demagoges* gens qui par adulation et flaterie meinent les populaires à leur volonté," but it was not till 1762 that the French Academy admitted *démagogue*, though Bossuet, in his *Histoire des Variations des Églises Protestantes* (1688), had written, "Je voudrais qu'il me fût permis d'employer le terme de 'démagogues'; c'était dans Athènes et dans les États populaires de la Grèce certains orateurs qui se rendaient tout puissants sur la populace en la flattant."

I have included this word because of the uncertainty of the date of its appearance in English. The first Oxford

## DICKER

Dictionary record is from *Eikon Basilike* (1648). Milton, in *Eikonoklastes* (1649), treats it as a "goblin word," and observes that "the King by his leave cannot come English as he could money." This would seem to show that *demagogue* was unknown in English before the publication of *Eikon Basilike*. But Gilbert Cousin, at one time Erasmus's secretary, in connection with some "adagia" which he added to those of Erasmus (ed. of 1574), writes, "Angli dicunt 'demagog.' Est enim, si verbum de verbo reddas, populum trahere." If Cousin got this information from Erasmus, who spent many years in England, it would show that *demagogue* was in use early in the 16th century.

## Dicker

In a book published in 1917, Mrs. Gertrude Atherton, the American novelist, made a character say that, as a result of the holocaust of youth demanded by the War, "husbands will be too scarce to dicker about," meaning that young women will have to take what they can get, without haggling. I first heard the word from a leather-merchant of philological tastes, who asked me why a bundle of ten skins was called a *dicker*.

This simple trade-word takes us back to the days of Imperial Rome, when skins and furs were one of the chief objects of barter between Roman and barbarian. Moreover, in some cases tribute was paid in the same form, e.g. by the Frisians (Tacitus, *Annals*, iv, 72). The Latin name for a set of ten, *decuria*, from *decem*, ten, is used in the sense of ten hides in a letter written by the Emperor Valerian, and, in various corrupted forms, it became the recognized unit of the trade in skins.<sup>1</sup> As an everyday word wherever Roman and northerner came in contact, it passed into all the Teutonic languages; cf. Ger. "*decher*: a dicker of leather, ten

<sup>1</sup> A kind of parallel is furnished by *mahuta*, the West African name for the "Angola penny." It originally meant bundle and was applied to a package of ten palm-fibre mats used as a unit of currency.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

hides" (Ludwig) and Dan. *deger*. In Domesday Book it is used, in a barbarous Med. Latin form, for ten bars of iron, but the general association in English, as in Dutch, German and Scandinavian, is with hides, and in this sense it is still current among those who have to do with leather.

The sense of haggling, bartering, swopping, developed in the United States. In Fenimore Cooper's *Oak Openings* or the *Bee-hunter* (1848) we read that "the white men who penetrated to the semi-wilds were always ready to dicker and swap," and, as these white men were mostly trappers and hunters in quest of pelts, it seems a reasonable inference that their use of the word reflected the fur-trade with the Indians. If so, it is a curious example of the continuity of word-history, that a term first used by the Roman in his mercantile dealings with the barbarian should, after twenty centuries, have started a new existence at the meeting-place of the settler and the savage in another hemisphere.

## Disease

Our mental reaction to the sound of a word has little to do with its musical quality or its etymological meaning. It is almost entirely a question of association. There is hardly a more repellent word in English than *disease*, though it has no more intrinsic horror in it than *discomfort*, which has become weakened just as *disease* has become strengthened: "The abhominacioun of discomfort that is said of Danyel the prophete" (Wyclif, Matt. xxiv. 15).

The history of *disease* illustrates the inevitable fate of the euphemism, its gradual acquisition of a sense more unpleasant than that of the older term which it was intended to avoid. When we wish to describe what is *nasty* or *dirty*, we forsake these old words, once much stronger than now, and try to express our feelings more fully with *disgusting* and *unsavoury*, mere euphemisms which mean no more than distasteful. The extreme of human depravity is expressed in

## DISEASE

*infamous*, and any number of the most desolating epithets can be coined by the use of that amazing *un-* which we can prefix to nearly every adjective in the language: "We have our profound and powerful particle in our *undone*, *unloved*, *unforgiven*, the *un-* that summons in order that it may banish, and keeps the living word present to hear sentence and denial" (Alice Meynell)

To return to the word *disease*, the Anglo-Saxon was unaffectedly and unashamedly *sick*. Early Mid. English borrowed from Old Norse the word *ill*, with the general sense of evil which it still has in "ill weeds grow apace," "it's an ill wind that blows no one good," etc. In the 15th century this began to compete with *sick*, though it is not used in the Bible in this sense, and in Shakespeare is usually semi-adverbial ("to look ill," etc.). As the older *sick* came to denote one particular symptom of bodily discomfort, it was gradually expelled from the polite vocabulary in the general sense of bad health, except in the literary style, in the United States, and in such compounds as *sick-list*. When a word expressive of mere indisposition was needed, *disease* naturally presented itself.

It is an old word in English, having been borrowed c. 1300 from Old Fr *desaise*, and, as late as the 16th century, it was still used in its etymological sense "Thy doughter is deed: why deseapest thou the master eny further" (Tyndale, Mark v. 35). Where we should now speak of being a little indisposed or unwell, Wriothesley, in his Chronicle (1553), speaks of Edward VI as "a little diseased from catching cold." But, before the century was out, *disease* was being used of dangerous maladies, and in 1602 Shakespeare wrote:

Diseases desperate grown,  
By desperate appliance are relieved.  
(Hamlet, iv, 3)

So the 18th century, in search of a word to describe a state of health for which *diseased* had become, by associa-



## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

tion, too strong, introduced *unwell*, already long familiar in Scotland and Ireland. It appears that it was Lord Chesterfield who gave polite currency to the new euphemism, so gracefully used in our own times by Private Mulvaney: " 'Let me out, bhoys,' sez I, backin' in among them 'I'm goin' to be onwell' " (With the Main-Guard).

### Dock

This word is found in many European languages, but is usually thought to have originated in England. The earliest record in the Oxford Dictionary is (1513) from Gavin Douglas's translation of the Aeneid: "Lat every barge do prent hyr self a dok," where Virgil has—

Inimicam findite rostris  
Hanc terram sulcumque sibi premat ipsa carina.<sup>1</sup>  
(Aeneid, x, 295)

Here *dok* corresponds to the Lat *sulcus*, furrow. This was the original meaning of the word. Cf. Captain John Smith's account (1626): "A wet docke is any place where you may hale in a ship into the oze out of the tides way, where shee may docke her selfe." The word was also used of the hollow made on a shoal or mudbank by a ship that had accidentally grounded. Phineas Pett, constructor to the Navy temp James I, describing such a mishap, writes (1613), "We caused an anchor to be laid right astern as her dock directed us."

It would appear then that *dock* may be identical with dialect Eng. *doke*, hollow, furrow, and Norw. *dokk*, hollow. But there is also an archaic Low Ger *docke*, runnel, gutter, so it is possible that our word originated in one of the German ports of the North Sea or the Baltic. At any rate it was known to the German Hanse merchants as early as 1436. It is also much older in English than the Oxford Dictionary records. A volume of Naval Accounts and In-

<sup>1</sup> Cleave this hostile land with your prows and let the keel press for itself a furrow.

## FELLOW

ventories (1495-7), published by the Navy Records Society, contains much information about the royal *dock* constructed at Portsmouth by Henry VII, perhaps the first *dock* in the current sense of the word. According to the editor of the volume, *dock* is found in 1434 applied to the bed made in the mud by a vessel when beached. This hollow was fenced round while repairs were in progress, so that the modern *dock* is a costly and permanent structure replacing a much more primitive contrivance.

This familiar linguistic process, viz the change in the connotation of a word as the object or action indicated becomes more elaborate, is also illustrated by *graving dock*, for earlier *graving beach*. To *grave* is to clean away all accretions from a ship's bottom as she lies ashore or in dry dock. It is derived from archaic Fr *grave*, beach, now usually *grève*. In French such a process was called *œuvres de marée*, lit. tide works, because hurriedly carried out as the vessel lay high and dry between tides.

Another early name for *graving* was *breaming*. This was done by singeing the ship's bottom with burning furze, broom, etc., and the word is derived from Dutch *brem*, broom. In the same way It. *bruscare*, to bream, is derived from *brusca*, broom, heather.

## Fellow

There is a legend of an ardent democrat, who, proclaiming from the platform that "one man is as good as another," elicited from his audience, along with an approving cheer, the enthusiastic addition, "Yus, and better too." This legend contains a great psychological truth. In very stressful times Chamfort's ironical democratic formula, "Sois mon frère, ou je te tue," may enforce a temporary external recognition of equality and fraternity, if not of liberty, but the innate snobbishness of man remains unchanged.

On that tragic occasion when Mr. Pickwick and Mr.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

Tupman nearly came to blows, the final exasperation of both was aroused by the epithet *fellow*. Even the genial Sam Weller became bellicose when "a individual in company" called him a "feller." If the difference of spelling means anything, we may conclude that Messrs Pickwick and Tupman used the pedantic pronunciation now taught at school, while Sam Weller still spoke the educated English of the 18th century.

Worth makes the man and want of it the fellow.  
The rest is all but leather or prunella

(Pope)

It was by the operation of that familiarity which breeds contempt that a word originally indicating equality and mutual helpfulness acquired for a time the sense of inferior. *Fellow* is Old Norse *félage*, from *félag*, partnership, made up from *fee*, in its original sense of wealth, cattle, and the root of the verb to *lay*. In early use it implied friendly association, like that good old word *mate*, now replaced in Socialist jargon by the absurd *comrade*.

The contemptuous use of *fellow* arose in the Middle Ages from the practice of addressing servants in this kindly fashion, just as Frenchmen of the old school use *mon ami* to their social inferiors. The accompanying touch of condescension gradually came to carry an offensive implication, and, by the time of Shakespeare and the Authorized Version, *fellow*, especially when used alone, was generally scornful. It might almost be said that it became two words, one preserving the original sense, which survives in the "goodly fellowship of the prophets," *fellow-feeling*, *Robin Goodfellow*, *schoolfellow*, "hail fellow well met," the other used vaguely for "chap," with an undertone of condescension or contempt.

Something of the same kind happened to *companion*, lit. bread-sharer, messmate, which has now recovered its dignity. "Scurvy companion" was a stock term of abuse from Shakespeare to Smollett. In fact, *fellow* and *companion*

## FOLKLORE

formed for many centuries one of those pairs of words, one native the other French, so numerous in our language. A "good fellow" was a "boon companion" (Fr. *bon compagnon*), and either word could be used to express one of a pair.

The Authorized Version uses *fellow* and *companion* indifferently (e.g. Judges xi. 37, 38), and, in the New Testament, such compounds as *fellow-citizen*, *-heir*, *-helper*, etc., are numerous. Here *fellow* represents the Greek prefix *συν-*, together, e.g. *συνδούλος*, fellow-servant (Matt. xviii. 28). Where *fellow* is used contemptuously by itself, there is as a rule no corresponding noun in the Greek or the Vulgate. The Greek for "this fellow" is simply *οὗτος*, while the Vulgate reads, "Hic non ejicit daemones nisi in Beelzebub principe daemoniorum" (Matt. xii. 24). The Revised Version substitutes "this man," while most Continental translations follow the original in using simply a demonstrative pronoun.

## Folklore

From the Conquest up to about A.D. 1400 a considerable proportion of our population was bilingual, speaking both English and French. The final blending was accomplished in two different ways. Usually the English and French words survived side by side, often with some differentiation in use, if not in actual sense, e.g. *board* and *table*, *stool* and *chair*. Johnson still has "*tabler* one who boards." Less frequently one or the other language prevailed, e.g. of our two most essential tradesmen the *baker* is pure English, the *butcher* is pure French. *Folk* and *people*<sup>1</sup> (Fr. *peuple*) have existed side by side for many centuries, the latter word having passed from the French-speaking part of the population to the English-speaking c. 1300. *Folk* has now become rather colloquial, and is often wrongly used in the plural, as in "the old folks," a usage chiefly American. It

<sup>1</sup> German has stuck to *volk*, using *pöbel* only for the rabble.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

survives also historically in such compounds as *folk-moot*, a general assembly, *folk-land*, originally common land.

In recent times many new compounds of *folk-* have come into existence. The 16th century began to develop an interest in the past life of the nation. The first antiquary was John Leland, officially appointed antiquary to Henry VIII in 1533. The archæological interest of the 16th and 17th centuries was mostly confined to the doings and records of the great, though the craze for the pastoral exemplified by Sidney and others involved some rather artificial contact with the "people." It was not till the 18th century that antiquarianism took a really popular turn. Landmarks in this movement are Bourne's *Antiquitates Vulgares* or the *Antiquities of the Common People* (1725), Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* (1763), Brand's *Observations on Popular Antiquities* (an elaboration of Bourne, 1777), and Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes of the English People* (1801). In all these there is no question of the word *folk*.

Herder, the great reviver of *folk-literature* in Germany, who was a keen student of Percy, found no German equivalent for the latter's "popular song." So he coined, in his essay on *Ossian und die Lieder alter Volker* (1773), the compound *volkshed*. His own great collection of specimens (1778-9) was entitled *Volkslieder*, for which a later editor of his works substituted the more pretentious *Stimmen der Volker in Liedern*. On the model of *volkshed* a number of similar compounds have been created, such as *volksetymologie*, popular etymology, i.e. the distortion of an unfamiliar word to make it look more familiar, e.g. *runagate* for *renegade* (p. 93).

The early 19th century was keenly interested in Germany, and it was possibly as a result of German influence that W. J. Thoms, the founder of our invaluable *Notes and Queries*, suggested, in the *Athenæum* (Aug. 22, 1846), that "what we in England designate as 'popular antiquities'

## FOXGLOVE

might be most aptly described by a good Saxon compound, 'folk-lore,' the lore of the people " This excellent coinage at once found favour, and has even been adopted in French. It has given birth to a whole family of *folk*-words, such as *folk-song*, *folk-speech*, *folk-tale*, *folk-dancing*, and is now rendered in German by *volkskunde*. There has thus been a good deal of give and take between English and German in this matter

Earlier than Thoms's *folklore*, an enthusiastic Anglo-Saxonist had suggested (*Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1830) bird-lore, star-lore, etc., as substitutes for the Greek ornithology, astronomy, etc. Some of these are occasionally used, and this humble volume might be described as dealing with 'word-lore.' Ger. *-lehre* is often employed in similar compounds

*Lore* is Anglo-Sax *lār*, teaching, doctrine: "Thā se Hælend thās word ge-endode, thā wundrode thæt folc his lāre" (*Matt.* vii. 28). From it was formed the verb *læran*, to teach *Lered*,<sup>1</sup> taught (*doctus*), was the regular Mid English name for a literate, as *lewd*<sup>2</sup> was for an illiterate:

For be he lewed man, or ellis lered,  
He noot (= wots not) how soone that he shal been afered.  
(Chaucer, C. 283)

We have replaced *lered* by *learned*, a solecism of the same type as the minatory "I'll learn you to behave yourself."

## Foxglove

"Plant out sweet williams, foxgloves and Canterbury bells. The foxgloves will do well in partial shade and will grow the taller there. The name is really 'folk's'—that is, fairy's—glove, from the shape of the flowers" (*Daily News*, Gardening Note). This "folk's-glove" is to be classed with

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ger. *gelehrt*, learned.

<sup>2</sup> Probably derived in some mysterious way from Lat. *laicus*.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

the hardy perennials, or, better still, with the everlasting, for nothing seems able to kill it. It belongs to that age in word-study when everything had to be explained as a "corruption" of something else, when *country-dance* was derived from Fr. *contredanse*<sup>1</sup> and the name *Shakespeare* was solemnly interpreted as coming from *Jacques Pierre*.

Most of the European races seem to have seen in the flower a resemblance to a thimble or finger-stall, the Latin for which is *digitale*. Accordingly the German botanist Fuchs (immortalized by the *fuchsia*) gave the *foxglove* (1542) the botanical name *digitalis*. In French it is *digitale*, with which cf. It. *digitello* and Sp. *dedalera* (from *deddl*, thimble), but the popular French name is "*gantelée*: the hearbe called fox-gloves" (Cotgrave). The scientific name was suggested to Fuchs by the Ger *fingerhut*, thimble, foxglove (lit. finger-hat), with which cf. Dutch *vingerhoed*, with the same two senses. The flower is in some English dialects called *thimble*, a name also applied both to the sea-campion and the harebell. The appropriateness of the name is evident. Another expressive dialect name for the *foxglove* is "bloody fingers" or "bloody man's fingers."

Early English folklore, however, usually associated the flower with the animal which is pre-eminent in legend and fable. A parallel to our *foxglove* is offered by Norw. *revbjolla*, fox-bell, in which *rev*, or *ræv*, means fox. The Oxford Dictionary also quotes a Norwegian form *revbjelde*. But this parallel is not necessary, for the Anglo-Saxon and Mid English records are quite conclusive as to the original form and meaning of the compound. In the Leechdoms (c. 1000) we find *foxes glofa*, the second word being apparently plural (our word is often listed as *foxgloves* in early dictionaries). *Foxesglove* occurs twice in a vocabulary of plant-names written down c. 1265, and in a botanical

<sup>1</sup> The opposite is the case. Fr *contredanse* was borrowed from English c. 1700. The English compound is as old as Spenser: "*hydegunes*: a countrey daunce or round" (Glossary to Shepherd's Calendar, June).

## GAZETTEER

treatise<sup>1</sup> of the 14th century *foxglove* is glossed by *ceroteca vulpis*, the first word being for *chirotheca*, glove, from Gr. χείρ, hand, θήκη,<sup>2</sup> case, while *vulpis* is the genitive of Lat *vulpes*, fox. So if *fox* is here a "corruption" of *folk's*, it must have been corrupted at a very tender age!

### Gazetteer

There are a few books without which a house is inadequately furnished. One of these is a good *gazetteer*. The history of the word starts at Venice, which had a copper coin of very small value called a *gazzetta*. It was at Venice also, about the middle of the 16th century, that the first *gazette* were published, those small, ill-printed news-sheets from which the modern daily Press has been evolved. Florio has "*gazette*: running reports, daily newes, idle intelligences, or flim-flam tales that are daily written from Italie, namely (= especially) from Rome and Venice."

There is also a Venetian *gazzetta*, dim. of *gazza*, a magpie. The relationship of the three seems to be that the coin was named from the bird, and that the news-sheet was either sold, or, more probably, allowed to be read, for and in consideration of the payment of one *gazzetta*. There is no unlikelihood in the theory of the bird becoming a coin. In slang English a halfpenny is a *mag*, and the *rap* that we don't care (an Irish counterfeit halfpenny of the early 18th century) apparently took its name from a German bad *pfennig*, bearing an unsuccessful eagle, which was derisively called a *rabe*,<sup>3</sup> i.e. raven. Another theory is that the news-sheet was called a magpie from its chatter.

However that may be, the word *gazette* reached England c. 1600 in the sense of news-sheet, and soon became one of

<sup>1</sup> The *Sinonima* Bartholomei, ed. Mowat (Oxf. 1882).

<sup>2</sup> Introduced early into English this gave us (bcd)-*tick*.

<sup>3</sup> *Rap* represents the Upper German form *rappe*, now used only of a black horse. The word was probably brought from Germany by Irish soldiers of fortune. *Rappen* is still used in Switzerland of a small coin.



## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

the regular names for the periodic Press. In 1665 appeared the first official journal published in England, now known as the London Gazette. A young officer is "gazetted," when the announcement of his appointment appears in the Gazette, while a business man "in the Gazette" is a bankrupt. The first number of this periodical was called the Oxford Gazette, because it was published there in November 1665, Charles II and his court having fled from the Plague. Pepys (Nov. 22, 1665) notes that "this day the first of the Oxford gazettes came out, which is very pretty, full of newes."

The earlier *gazettes* were mostly concerned with Continental war-news. Blount, in the preface to his *Glossographia* or Dictionary of Hard Words (1656), tells us, "In every Mercurius, Coranto, Gazet or Diurnal, I met with camisados, pallizados, lantspezados, brigades, squadrons, curasiers, bonemines, halts, junctas, paroles, etc." Thus came into existence a new profession, that of the *gazetteer*,<sup>1</sup> or journalist, a title for which unkind printers or ill-wishers to journalism soon found the variant *garreleer*. In Donne's panegyric verses prefixed to Coryat's *Crudities* (1611) occurs the ironical line, "As deep a statesman as a gazetteer," in which, when reprinted in his *Poems* (1650), *garreleer* was substituted. In fact, the earliest mentions of the craft are mostly allusive to journalistic ignorance. This was perhaps what led Lawrence Eachard to publish (c. 1690) a pocket-volume, "partly design'd for all such as frequent coffee-houses, and other places for news," to which he gave the title, *The Gazetteer's or Newsmen's Interpreter, a Geographical Index*, now known, along with all its offspring and imitations, simply as the *Gazetteer*.

### Gossamer

Some words seem to be the natural inheritance of the poet. *Gossamer* is still used in its literal sense, but our pro-

<sup>1</sup> Also called a *mercurist*.

## GOSSAMER

saic age inclines rather to *cobweb*, leaving *gossamer* to express the airily impalpable and iridescent:

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,  
And on these dews that drench the furze,  
And all the silvery gossamers  
That twinkle into green and gold.

(In Memoriam, xi.)

It has, in fact, always been a poetic word, from Chaucer to the present day.

Like other poetic words, it has been seized on by the tradesman in search of an effective symbol for lightness. An obsolete London slang name for a hat was *goss*. The Oxford Dictionary has no record of it after 1848, but Hotten's Slang Dictionary (1864) has the entry "*goss*: a hat; from gossamer silk with which modern hats are made," and I remember it quite well as in general use among schoolboys, c. 1880. Mr Sam Weller knew it in the longer form: "Afore the brim went, it was a werry handsome tile. Hows'ever it's lighter without it, that's one thing, and every hole lets in some air, that's another—wentilation gossamer I calls it" (Pickwick, ch 12).

It is probable that, before being applied to the threads spun by immature spiders, *gossamer* was used of the season of the year, a warm spell in autumn during which it is chiefly seen. The original name seems to have been *goose-summer*, about equivalent to the "St Martin's summer" which we have borrowed from French, and referring to the fact that geese are then in season, so that the origin of our pretty word may be prosaic. The same might be said of *butterfly*, which suggests all that is bright-hued, dainty and graceful, but which, when analysed into its component parts, has no more inherent poetry than *cheese-mite*. But the name may refer to the southward flight of the wild geese in autumn.

In German both the season and the filaments are called *mädchensommer* (maiden-summer) and *altweibersommer* (old

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

wives' summer). Dutch *kraanzomer* substitutes the crane for the goose, probably because flocks of cranes were seen flying south in autumn. Other fanciful names are Dutch *zomerdraden* and Ger. *sommerfaden* (summer threads), also Dutch *herfstdraden* (autumn threads), and, prettiest of all, Fr. *filz de la Vierge*, Our Lady's threads.

### Gossoon

That *beef* and *cow* are ultimately the same word is one of those facts that delight the student of etymology and provoke the incredulous bray of the ignorant. Similarly *wretch* and *gossoon* have not a sound or letter in common, but it is not difficult to establish their ultimate identity.

Anglo-Saxon had a verb *wrecan*, to avenge, which we now use in the pleonasm "to wreak vengeance," or incorrectly in "to wreak havoc."<sup>1</sup> Its original sense was to drive, expel, and it is cognate with Lat. *urgere*. The "avenger of blood" (Joshua xx. 5) is Coverdale's substitute for Wyclif's "blood-wrecker." The verb is found in all the Teutonic languages, e.g. Ger. *rachen*, to avenge, which once meant to expel and began with a *w-*. It is also related to *wrack*, *wreck*, the thing driven. Corresponding to the verb was an Anglo-Saxon noun *wræcca*, an outcast, exile, hence a miserable person, "wretch," the sense that has persisted up to the present day.

We have a parallel to the history of *wretch* in Ger. *elend*, wretched, originally exiled, from Old High Ger. *eli-lenti*, "other-landish," the first element of which is cognate with Eng. *else* and Lat. *alius*, and also survives in Ger. *Elsass* (Fr. *Alsace*), seat of strangers.

The German noun *recke*, corresponding to *wretch*, has had a very different history. The sense of exile passed into that of desperado, just as It. *bandito*, the banished man, came to mean robber. In Mid. High German a *recke* was first an

<sup>1</sup> This and similar phrases seem to be due to the illusion that *wreak* is the present tense of *wrought*.

## GRASS-WIDOW

exile, then an adventurer, then a hueling fighting-man or soldier of fortune, and finally a stout warrior, a hero. With the revival of an interest in the medieval the word was disinterred by the 18th-century poets, and *recke* became a favourite term in the vocabulary of the early German Romantics. In Modern German it is a stock journalistic epithet for imposing figures, such as that of Bismarck in cuirassier uniform.

The earliest form of *recke* was Old High Ger. *wrecceo*. Like many other words that can be applied to persons, it is recorded as a proper name, in the Latinized form *Waracio*, earlier (9th century) than its occurrence as a common noun.

The etymology of the French word *garçon* has busied most etymologists at some time or other. It has long been recognized that a Late Lat. *warcio*, *warcionem*, of Teutonic origin, would account for *gars*, *garçon*, and this *warcio* is now discovered<sup>1</sup> in the original form of Ger. *recke*, a "wretch." In the oldest French texts *garçon* means something like varlet, a sense easily evolved from that of the Germanic original. Its earliest-known occurrence is in the *Chanson de Roland*, where it is coupled with *esquier*.

*Garçon* is now regarded in English as a word to be pronounced in pseudo-French fashion. In the *Daily News*, "Under the Clock" once defined *garson* as "a cry emitted at short intervals by Englishmen travelling abroad." But it was completely acclimatized in Mid. English in the form *garsoon*. In the 17th century it dropped out of use, but not before it had been adopted in Anglo-Irish as *gossoon*.

## Grass-widow

From the days of the Matron of Ephesus down to those of Mr. Weller's "second wentur," the widow has been the subject of much ill-natured criticism, and her title has been decorated with ironical additions. In 18th-century French a lady whose husband was absent in the East was some-

<sup>1</sup> See Kluge, *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, xh, 684.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

times called a "veuve de Malabar."<sup>1</sup> In the fifties of the 19th century New York had many "California widows," whose husbands had joined the gold-rush. "Golf-widow" is a 20th-century witticism modelled on the Anglo-Indian *grass-widow*. The latter came into use, apparently after the Mutiny, to describe "ladies recreating in the hill-stations, while their husbands are at their duties in the plains" (Hobson-Jobson<sup>2</sup>). Though the name is often used "with a shade of malignity" (ibid.), the Anglo-Indian *grass-widow* has, except for the playful allusion to her forsaken condition, no connection in meaning with the 16th-century *grass-widow*, who was an improper person.

A *grass-widow* was, according to the Dictionary of the Canting Crew (c. 1700), "one that pretends to be married, but never was, yet has children." In this disreputable sense it is still used in dialect, and is well documented, also in the sense of discarded mistress, from the 16th century onward. The first Oxford Dictionary record is from Sir Thomas More (1528). There is a gap between its disappearance from polite English at the end of the 18th century and its Anglo-Indian revival in a less objectionable sense.

The type of etymologist who explains *Welsh rabbit* as "Welsh rarebit"<sup>3</sup> and turns the Malay *ketchup* into *catsup* has tried to work his wicked will on *grass-widow*, which he proclaims to be a corruption of "grace-widow." The parallel Continental forms show that *grass* is the original form, though it is doubtful whether it is connected with turning out to grass or with grass as the bed of the outcast. Heywood (1546) ends the account of a conjugal disagreement with the lines:

<sup>1</sup> Originally the title of a tragedy by Lemierre (1770).

<sup>2</sup> A Glossary of Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases, by Yule and Burnell.

<sup>3</sup> This first appears in Grose (1785). *Welsh rabbit* (for which Mrs. Glasse has *Scotch rabbit*) is much older. Cf. such fanciful names as *Bombay duck* (a fish), *Dutch oyster*, *Scotch woodcock*, *angels on horseback*, etc.

## GRASS-WIDOW

At end of that fray asunder they go,  
And never after came together againe—  
He turned her out, at doores to grase on the plaine.

(Proverbs 11 10.)

the last line being apparently a recognized proverbial expression used in such context. The Old French phrase "laisser sur le vert," to abandon, may have had a similar origin.

The equivalent Continental terms usually have simply the meaning of deserted wife, though sometimes with an implied reflection on the lady's morals. In connection with Ger. *strohwitwe*, lit straw-widow, not found before the 18th century, some lines from Goethe's *Faust* are always quoted. These are spoken by the deserted Martha, who has been left "on the straw"

Gott verzeih's meinem lieben mann,  
Er hat an mir nicht wohl getan!  
Geht da stracks in die welt hinein  
Und lasst mich auf dem stroh allein.<sup>1</sup>

(*Faust*, 1, 2865)

In Danish we find *græs-enke* (*enke* = widow), now used in the modern sense of *grass-widow*, but earlier of a widow whose husband had been hanged, while Swed. *gras-anka*, wife whose husband is absent, has, in dialect, also an opprobrious sense. These words are both translated from archaic Low Ger. *gras-wedewe*. The corresponding Dutch word is *gras-weduwe*, for which we find also earlier *hæck-weduwe*, explained by Kilian (1620) as "mulier mariti absentis adventum avide affectans, qd vidua expectans sive appetens avide." This definition associates the *grass-widow* with *hæcken* (now *haaken*), to desire, lit to hook. The analogy of the other languages suggests that she is more likely to be connected with an obsolete *hæck* which Kilian explains as "meta foeni," i e. a haycock. *Hæck-weduwe* is also recorded

<sup>1</sup> God forgive my dear husband,  
He has not behaved well to me!  
Goes straightway out into the world  
And leaves me alone on the straw.

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in a Dutch-Latin Dictionary of 1587, i e not much later than our *grass-widow*

From all this it is clear that the lady in whom we are interested has to do, not with grace, but with grass, or, alternatively, with straw or hay To the suggestions already offered for the reason of the name may be added the statement in Falk and Torp that, in some districts of Germany, brides who have anticipated conjugal life are obliged at their nuptials to replace the floral wreath by one of straw. This may, however, be rather a result of the name than its cause Finally, we may mention the practice, alluded to in Faust, of strewing *hackerling*, i e chopped straw, before the doors of the unchaste

Das kranzel reissen die buben ihr,  
Und hackerling streuen wir vor die tür.<sup>1</sup>

(Faust, 1, 3575 )

### Gun

The great *gun* seems, by its size, noise and general impressiveness, to have assumed for our ancestors a sort of human character resulting in the attribution of a personal name. Let us work backwards The giant *gun* which, during World War I, dropped shells into Paris from a distance of about seventy miles, was affectionately called by the Germans "die dicke (fat) Bertha," from the name of the lady who inherited the Krupp works and millions About the same time a six-inch howitzer collecting War Loan subscriptions in the East End of London was greeted as "Hungry Liz " During the South African War the garrison of Ladysmith were much worried by a Boer cannon which they called "Long Tom," a very old name in the Navy for a *gun* of great range and calibre During the Royalist uprising in La Vendée (1793) at the time of the French Revolution, the peasants regarded as a kind of mascot one "Marie-Jeanne," an antiquated field-piece

<sup>1</sup> The lads will tear off her garland and we will strew chaff before her door.

## GUN

which they dragged about with them everywhere. At Edinburgh Castle there is a 15th-century culverin known as "Long Meg," from its size, or "Mons Meg," from the Belgian town where it was probably cast. A German gun famous in the Brandenburg wars of the early 15th century was called "die faule Grete," lazy Peggy.

With the 14th century we come back to the mother of all guns, the "Lady Gunhilda." The word *gun* is pre-gunpowder, like *artillery*, still used of bows and arrows even in the Authorized Version. When Jonathan had finished shooting, "he gave his artillery unto his lad" (1 Samuel, xx. 40). The first mention of *guns* in the modern sense is dated 1339, when "sex instrumenta de latone (brass) vocitata gonnes" are included in an inventory of the London Guildhall. By Chaucer's day the word was quite familiar:

Throughout every regioun  
Wente this foule trumpet soun,  
As swift as pelet<sup>1</sup> out of gonne,  
When fyre is in the poudre donne

(House of Fame, ii, 551.)

But the earliest known *gun* was a catapult or mangonel. In an inventory of Windsor Castle (1330-1) occurs the item "una magna ballista de cornu quae vocatur 'Domina Gunhilda,'" and an allusion to the same stone-hurling engine, by the name of Gonild, is found in a political song of still more ancient date. It is probable that the English "gonners and artellers" of whom we read in 1344 had as much to do with mangonels as with the new fire-arms. The transition of sense has a parallel in the British soldier's *bandook* or *bundook*, a rifle, originally the Arabic name for a crossbow. A still closer parallel is *howitzer*, which became familiar during World War I. Until *robot* became a "vogue-word," this was the only Czech contribution to English. It was originally a stone-throwing machine used in the Hussite wars of the 14th century.

<sup>1</sup> Both *pellet* and *bullet* were originally used of large projectiles; cf. Fr. *boulet*, cannon-ball, and Eng. *bullet-headed*.



## Harlequin

Demons and fiends are usually decorated with personal names, sometimes almost friendly in character, such as our "Old Harry" or "Old Nick" for the Enemy of Mankind. The minor demon which scientists call the *ignis fatuus*, a Med. Latin translation of Fr *feu follet*, is not only known as "Will o' the wisp" and "Jack o' lantern," but also in dialect as "Billy wi' t' wisp," "Hob lantern," "Kitty candlestick," "Peggy lantern," "Dick a Tuesday," "Gillian burn-tail," etc. In the neighbourhood of Béthune he is *arlequin*, and few words have led to more etymological conjectures and research <sup>1</sup>

*Harlequin*, as we know him, is one of the group of pantomime characters who belonged originally to the Italian *commedia dell' arte*. But, before becoming the associate of Columbine and Pantaloon, he was a medieval fiend, some of whose diabolical features persist in details of his costume and his supposed invisibility to the other actors. His name is found, from the 12th century onward, in Old French, with a large number of variants (*Herlechin*, *Herlekin*, *Hellequin*, *Hennequin*, *Hernequin*, *Herlewin*, etc.). He is represented as the demon leader of a demon band of hunters, galloping across country at night or heard passing through the air. The myth, which is an old one, belongs especially to Normandy, where it still persists, though the name suggests a Flemish origin. It probably belongs to prehistoric paganism, but Christianity converted it into a legend of the unquiet spirits of the damned.

In the Middle Ages *Harlequin* degenerated into a comic devil of street performances, eventually annexed by the Italian *commedia*, and, as the old rustic superstition did not die out, the original fiend divided, so to speak, into two personalities.

As is usual with such legends, *Harlequin* became identi-

<sup>1</sup> See especially Driesen, *Der Ursprung des Harlekin* (Berlin, 1904), and Rühlemann, *Etymologie des Wortes arlequin* (Halle & S., 1912).

## HARLEQUIN

fied with various historical characters, e.g. with Herod, with a rather vague Hernequin, Count of Boulogne, and, by a wild anachronism, with Charles-Quint<sup>1</sup> (†1380), who, in this version of the legend, is confused with Charles Martel, who defeated the Moors in 732. These are all edifying explanations, tending to show the punishment of the wicked.

The earliest account describes the *famula Herlechini*, rendered in Old French by "la mesnie<sup>2</sup> Hellequin" and in Mid. English (Langland) by "Hurlewayne's meyne or kynne." Later he becomes Hellwain, mentioned by Archbishop Harsnett in his Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures (1603), and his last incarnation in this country is as "Herne the Hunter," who haunted Windsor Forest with his demon band, and is mentioned several times in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Apart from the forced association of *Harlequin* with various historical names, a few more fantastic guesses may be mentioned. He has been derived from the town of Arles, from the Flemish *hellekint*, child of hell, from It. *arlotto* and *lecchino*, both meaning glutton, and has even been identified with the Erlking<sup>3</sup>. Finally, some forms of the name and the "big club" (p. 48) of the earliest account rather suggest some intrusion of Hercules, who, for the medieval stage was a ranting tyrant (see *Midsummer Night's Dream*, i, 2). Mr. Allardyce Nicoll, in *Masks, Mimes and Miracles*, quotes a 16th-century Latinist's description of an actor so costumed "ut luderet personam Herculis vel Harlequini in comedia"; but the late date and the ambiguous force of *vel* make this evidence worthless so far as the original demon

<sup>1</sup> Charles V of France, not the famous 16th-century Emperor usually meant by this title.

<sup>2</sup> Old French for household, retinue, whence obsolete Eng. *meny* (*Lear*, ii, 4) and the derivative *menial*.

<sup>3</sup> This title, made famous by Goethe's ballad, is due to Herder's mistake in translating the Danish *ellerkong*, which is for *elverkong*, king of the elves, as though it meant king of the alders (Ger. *erie*).

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rider is concerned Nor does one remember that Hercules was much of an equestrian.

The earliest records of the demon's appearance are delightfully naive Ordericus Vitalis, writing in Latin c. 1130, tells how the wild hunt was encountered on Jan. 1, 1092, by a priest named Gauchelin, who was even able to identify some of the riders ! The *familia* was led by Herlechinus, of gigantic stature and armed with a huge club. The ladies of the band, who rode on side-saddles studded with white-hot nails, were occasionally lifted a cubit by the wind, and then dropped back in such a way that "in natibus vulnerabantur." Walter Map, in his *De Nugis Curialium* (c 1200), informs us that the *Herlething*, the demon retinue of a British King Herla, was last seen in Herefordshire in the first year of Henry II (1154), several Welshmen having observed its final plunge into the Wye!

The etymology of the name remains unsolved. Ruhle-mann puts forward confidently as origin the Flemish *hellekin*, little hell. My own conviction, based, it is true, on much less knowledge and research, is that it is some familiar personal name, used like one of the many appellations of the *ignis fatuus* *Hennequin*, now a common French surname, is the Flemish *Henekin*, i.e. Johnny, which is used also as a term of vituperation. The oldest recorded form is *Herlechin*, but who can say how many variants existed before the time of Ordericus Vitalis?

## Henchman

In English a *henchman* is usually the stalwart and trusty right-hand man of the hero or villain in romantic narrative. In the United States he is, according to the Century Dictionary, "a mercenary adherent; a venal follower; one who holds himself at the bidding of another." In the Middle Ages he was a horsegroom There is a gap of about two centuries in his history. When a word belonging to the

## HENGHMAN

romantic or picturesque vocabulary offers a chronological puzzle of this kind, the answer is usually Scott.

*Hengest-man*, with a number of variant forms,<sup>1</sup> is copiously recorded in Mid. English in a sense which it is now impossible to define exactly, but, as it comes from Anglo-Sax. *hengest*,<sup>2</sup> a stallion, the *hengest-man*, like the *marshal*<sup>3</sup> and the *constable*,<sup>3</sup> probably started as a groom and gradually rose in the world. Palsgrave equates *henchman* with *page d'honneur* and *enfant d'honneur*, evidently a youth of high rank. The corps of "royal henchmen," also called "children of honour," was dissolved by Queen Elizabeth in 1565, with the result that the word died out.

In 1810 Scott revived it in the *Lady of the Lake* (ii, 35), a footnote explaining that "a henchman was the confidential attendant or gilly of a chief. His standing behind his lord at festivals originated the name of haunchman or henchman." Four years later, in *Waverley* (ch. 16), Evan Dhu, describing to the hero of the novel the glories of his chieftain's state, begins the enumeration of the retinue with his "haunchman or right-hand man." In the form *henchman* it at once became a popular word with romantic poets and novelists. The question arises, what is the connection between this *haunch-man*, which in Scottish would be pronounced *hainchman*, *henchman*, and the medieval *hengest-man*, the ancestor of the Tudor *henchman*?

There is a link, though a weak and dubious one, between Queen Elizabeth and Scott. During the years 1724-35, Major-General Wade was policing the Highlands and building military roads across the hills:

Had you seen but these roads before they were made,  
You would hold up your hands and bless General Wade.

<sup>1</sup> Such as *Hensman*, *Hinxman*, *Hinksman*, surviving as modern surnames.

<sup>2</sup> A word common to the Teutonic language; cf. Dutch and Ger. *hengst*. It was also the war-name of a famous invader.

<sup>3</sup> Via Old French from Old High Ger. *marah-scalth*, horse servant, and Vulgar Lat. *comes stabuli*, companion of the stable.

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He had with him in his employ, in a civil capacity, one Edward Burt, who recorded his impressions of the Highlands in Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland.<sup>1</sup> It was from this book that Scott obtained much of his Highland local colour, for, as a Lowlander or Borderer, he had no great first-hand knowledge of Gaelic matters. There is little doubt that it was his source for *henchman*. Burt gives a full account of the *hanchman*, "ready on all occasions to venture his life in defence of his master; and at drinking-bouts he stands behind his seat, at his haunch, from whence his title is derived." There is no other authority for *hanchman* in the sense of Highland gully, and it almost looks as if Burt invented the word, misunderstood his informant, or had his leg pulled by some young officer more familiar with Highland matters. For it can hardly be supposed that an English word, obsolete soon after 1600, would bob up suddenly among the Scotch mountains with a new sense and a fanciful etymology.

My own opinion is that Scott, who knew Tudor and Stuart literature inside out, jumped to the conclusion that Burt's *hanchman* was identical with the Shakespearean *henchman*—

Why should Titania cross her Oberon?  
I do but beg a little changeling boy  
To be my henchman.<sup>2</sup>

(Midsummer Night's Dream, II, 1)—

and believed that the latter, whose medieval history and early disappearance did not come within his knowledge, was veritably a *haunch-man*.

### Homesick

It is doubtful whether the ancients had any poetic conception of home. Ulysses and Ovid both disliked the toils

<sup>1</sup> Referred to by Scott, in his preface to *Waverley*, as "the curious 'Letters from the Highlands,' published about 1726."

<sup>2</sup> The only occurrence of the word in Shakespeare.

## HOMESICK

and discomforts of exile, but neither Greek nor Latin has any word expressive of that longing for home, which, like the love of natural stenery, is an essentially modern aspect of human feeling. According to Aristophanes, Πατρίς γὰρ ἔστι παρ' ἡν ἄν πράττῃ τίς εὖ (Plutus, l 1151), which Cicero renders, "Patria est, ubicumque est bene" (Tusculan Disputations). The same is true of the old Teutons. Ger. *elend*, misery, lit exile (see p 40), reflects the feelings of the banished man, but neither in Old High German nor in Anglo-Saxon is there any word at all corresponding to *homesickness*, which did not come into English use till the end of the 18th century.

It was in May 1798 that Coleridge, while in Germany, wrote a poem called "Homesick," in which occurs the line "Homesickness is a wasting pang" It was suggested to him by Ger *heimweh*,<sup>1</sup> lit home-woe, the poetical use of which in Germany is not much anterior to Coleridge's poem It is as rare to find a 19th-century German poet who has not written a poem with the title *Heimweh*, as to find one of the 18th century who has In its earliest occurrences in poetic German *heimweh* always has specific reference to Switzerland, to the longing of the exiled mountaineer for his Alpine home, or the tears shed by the Swiss mercenary on hearing the *ranz des vaches* or *kuhreigen*:

Zu Strassburg auf der schanz,  
Da ging mein trauern an  
Das Alphorn hort' ich druben wohl anstimmen.  
Ins vaterland musst' ich hinuber schwimmen \* . . .

This famous *volkslied* appeared in its present form in Des Knaben Wunderhorn, a collection of old songs and ballads compiled (1805) by Arnim and Brentano. It violently introduces the Swiss *heimweh* motif (with the soldier at

<sup>1</sup> Also translated into French (c. 1700) as *mal* (or *maladie*) *du pays*.

<sup>2</sup> At Strasbourg on the ramparts my sorrow began. I heard the Alphorn played yonder. I had to swim across to the fatherland . . .

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Strasbourg hearing the Alphorn in Switzerland!), in place of the much more prosaic original.

Da wollt' ich den Franzosen desertieren,  
Und wollt' es bei den Preussen probieren.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the most beautiful of all *heimweh* songs is Mignon's, in Wilhelm Meister, "Kennst du das land, wo die citronen bluh'n?" This was written in 1784, but, though Goethe was already familiar with the word *heimweh*, it was for him a Swiss provincialism of rather prosaic meaning, quite unsuited to dignified lyric. Even the Swiss poet Haller, writing at Leyden in 1726, entitled his *heimweh* poem "Sehnsucht nach dem Vaterlande," Longing for the Fatherland, avoiding, as it were, the native term so familiar to him. Early occurrences in German prose usually relate to "das sogenannte Schweizerheimweh," the so-called Swiss homesickness.

The origin of the word is prosaic. It is known that mountaineers are affected in health by being transplanted to the plain. This seems to have been especially the case with the Swiss, though we have equally early records of *heimweh* as attacking men from the Bavarian Highlands. The first mentions of the word are in purely medical literature, and the learned term *nostalgia*, from Gr. *νόστος*, return home, *ἄλγος*, pain, is of equal antiquity. Both make almost their first appearance in print in the title of a work published in 1678 by J. J. Horder, a doctor at Basel *Dissertatio Medica de Nostalγία* oder Heimwehe oder Heimsucht. As late as c 1790 Casanova writes, "J'étais atteint de ce qu'on appelle nostalgie et que les Suisses et les Allemands appellent 'heimweh,' mal de chez soi, mal du pays. Pour les Suisses le 'heimweh' est une maladie mortelle, une véritable peste, qui les emporte vite, si l'on ne se hâte de les rendre à leurs pénates."

To sum up, "Our word was not created by love of nature,

<sup>1</sup> I wanted to desert the French and make a trial of the Prussian service.

## HONEYMOON

it is not the expression of a contemplative yearning, awakened or intensified by long deprivation. It came into German from the medical literature of Switzerland as the name of a Swiss malady. Neither Mignon nor Iphigenia could use the dialect word. Schiller and Holderlin avoid it entirely. Wherever it occurs in German literature of the 18th century, it bears the stamp of its alien origin. Only after Mignon had given voice to her deep sorrow in the deepest of all heimweh-songs, did 'heimweh' begin to appear as the motif of lyric poetry outside Switzerland" (Kluge, *Wortforschung und Wortgeschichte*, p. 75).

### Honeymoon

The newly wed are apt to appear somewhat comic, or tragic, to those who realize the inevitability of the "waning" of the *honeymoon*. The first lexicographer to note our word is Minshew (1617). "*hone-moone* applied to those that love well at the first, and not so well afterwards, but will change as doth the moone." So also Blount (1656): "*hony-moon*: applied to those married persons that love well at first and decline in affection afterwards. It is hony now, but it will change as the moon." Miège (1688) is cruder: "When a couple are newly married, the first month is all 'honey moon' or smick-smack, the second is hither and thither, the third is thwick-thwack, and the fourth, the Devil take them that brought thee and I together." The 18th century is more optimistic, or, at any rate, non-committal, e.g. Johnson's definition is "the first month after marriage, when there is nothing but tenderness and pleasure."

The Oxford Dictionary tells us that the compound had originally "no reference to the period of a month, but compared the mutual affection of newly married persons to the changing moon, which is no sooner full than it begins to wane." Though this view is supported by the earliest examples, this is probably only due to the innate cussedness of human nature, for the corresponding expressions in other



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languages point distinctly to a period of time. Fr. *lune de miel* and It. *luna di miele* are of much more recent formation than *honeymoon*, and are translated from the English word.

Apparently much older than the English term is Old Norse *hyñöittsmānathr*,<sup>1</sup> lit. wedding-night-month. German has *flutterwochen*, lit. tinsel weeks, recorded from the early 16th century. *Flutter* is explained by a German lexicographer (1616) as "ornamentum capitis," and an 18th-century authority states that brides wore their spangled wedding-caps and fal-lals for a certain period after marriage. Others connect *flutterwochen* with Mid. High Ger. *flintern*, to carress. In South Germany *kussmonat*, kiss month, was usual. It occurs (1669) in the famous realistic novel *Simplicissimus*. Most homely of all is Dutch *wittebroods-ween*, lit. white-bread-weeks, suggesting the peasant couple's respite from toil and frugality. This is rather oddly amplified in Sewel's Dutch Dictionary (1766): "*honeymoon*: wittebroods week, de eerste maand na dat men getrouwd is, als men nog geen zak zout met malkanderen gegeten heeft," i.e. the first month after people are married, when they have still not eaten a sack of salt together. The connection between salt and long intercourse is old in Dutch, and goes back to the classics. It is referred to by Aristotle and Plutarch; cf. also "Verum id est quod vulgo dicitur multos modos salis simul edendos esse, ut amicitiae munus expletum sit" (Cicero, *De Amicitia*, xix, 67).

### Husbandman

It is probable that no one ever did so much to arouse an intelligent interest in word-history as Archbishop Trench. His two books, *On the Study of Words* (1851) and *English Past and Present* (1855), were the first attempts to make the dry bones of philology live. He was a man of great learning and wide reading, but necessarily handi-

<sup>1</sup> Is it possible that *honeymoon* has nothing to do with *honey*, but is popular etymology for this Old Norse word?

## HUSBANDMAN

capped by the rudimentary state of philological knowledge in his day. He was, moreover, somewhat too ready to accept etymologies which furnished opportunities for improving the occasion: "And other words there are, having reference to the family and the relations of family life, which are not less full of teaching, which each may serve to remind of some duty. For example, 'husband' is properly 'house-band,' the band and bond of the house, who shall bind and hold it together. Thus, old Tusser, in his Points of Husbandry:

The name of the 'husband' what is it to say?  
Of wife and of household the band and the stay."

The second syllable of *husband* is not *band*, a tie, but *bond*, a dweller, a word introduced from Old Norse,<sup>1</sup> and originally the present participle of a verb meaning to dwell. It is ultimately related to Ger. *bauer*, a peasant or farmer. The Anglo-Sax *hūsbonða* was not necessarily either a married man or a farmer, but simply a householder, the master of the house. It is probably this sense of the word that survives in the surname Younghusband. The word early assumed the meaning of tiller, and, in some regions, corresponded to the *villain*,<sup>2</sup> or servile tenant. The sense in which *husband* is now most familiar appears in early Mid. English.

Our curious trick of turning a noun into a verb gave us the verb to *husband*, to manage. The oldest meaning of husbandry was the administration of a household (cf. housewifery), corresponding to Gr. *οικονομία*, house-rule, "economy." When Tusser wrote (1557) his Hundredth Good Pointes of Husbandrie, he was thinking, not

<sup>1</sup> The Old Norse word is *bondi*, earlier *buondi*, from *bua*, to dwell, a verb found in the other Teutonic languages, gradually assuming the sense of cultivating, building. *Bonde* still exists in Danish and Swedish, and is often contemptuous, like our *churl*, etc. (see p. 21). *Bondage*, originally the tenure of land by a *bond*, or farmer, early acquired, partly by association with *bond*, a fetter, the sense of servitude.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 22.

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only of agriculture, at which, like some other theorists, he had been a failure, but of the economic management of a household. On December 5, 1667, Pepys sent his father six pairs of his old shoes, "not for want, but for good husbandry."

Mid. English elaborated *husband* into *husbandman* (cf. fisherman, merchantman, etc.), with the double sense of householder, farmer. The Oxford Dictionary records it from c. 1330, but it must be much older, for in the Patent Rolls for 1225-32 occurs the name of John Husebundeman. A word must have a long life before it becomes an official description, so it is possible that *husbandman* really existed in late Anglo-Saxon. In Wyclif *husbandman* is used in the "master of the house" sense, e.g. "Gif the housbonde man [Vulgate, *paterfamilias*, Gr. οἰκοδεσπότης] wiste in what houre the thief were to come, trewly he shulde wake" (Matt. xxiv. 43), while in the parable of the vineyard (Matt. xxi. 33), it is a *husbondman* [Vulgate, *paterfamilias*, Gr. οἰκοδεσπότης] who plants the vineyard and lets it to "erthe tilers" [Vulgate, *agricolae*, Gr. γεωργοί]. In Tyndale it is a householder who lets the vineyard to *husbandmen*.

Most people, if suddenly asked for the masculine of "wife," would reply "husband." Strictly speaking, the correct answer would be "man" (cf. the corresponding Fr. *homme*, Ger. *mann*, and our "man and wife"). The feminine of *husband* is *housewife*, Anglo-Sax. *huswif*,<sup>1</sup> which has a curious history. Colloquially it became *hussy*,<sup>2</sup> *hussy*. As late as the 18th century a "good hussy" meant an economical manager, but, being often used vituperatively, preceded by such adjectives as "light," "saucy," "skittish," "impudent," etc., the word gradually absorbed such adjectives into itself,

<sup>1</sup> Not actually recorded till early Mid. English.

<sup>2</sup> With the use of this word for a pocket sewing-case, cf. Fr. *châtelaine*, chain to which keys, sewing-case, etc., are suspended, lit. lady of the castle.

## IRONSIDE

just as *quean*, woman, did at an earlier date. The full form *housewife* was also used in the same way up to the early 18th century, e.g. "impudent housewife" occurs in Vanbrugh's *Confederacy* (v. 2).

With *hussy* for *housewife* we may compare *goody* for *goodwife*: "What's the matter with his leg, goody?" (Farquhar, *The Beaux' Stratagem*, iv, 1) This was once the regular name for a woman whose station did not entitle her to be called "mistress," and, within the memory of those now living, was still applied to old countrywomen. Falstaff addresses Mrs. Quickly as *goodwife* (*Merry Wives*, ii, 2), but always says "Mistress Ford."

The Authorized Version adopts Tyndale's "good man off the house" for Wyclif's *husbandman* (Matt. xxiv. 43). By the Elizabethans *goodman*<sup>1</sup> and *goodwife* were sometimes used with some tinge of condescension. In Shakespeare *goodman* is often contemptuous: "Come hither, goodman baldpate. Do you know me?" (*Measure for Measure*, v), but in Scottish both *gudeman* and *gudewife* have preserved a quiet dignity.

## Ironsides

Most of our kings and princes bear historic nicknames. Some of these nicknames are the inventions of chroniclers who lived centuries after their supposed bearers or the imaginations of modern poets and romancers. The epithet *sine terra* is found applied to John before he came to the throne. Edward I is described by Langtoft as "od le lunge jambes," the barbarous Anglo-French equivalent of "with the longe shonkes," which occurs in a political song on the execution of Sir Simon Frazer (1306). So we may assume that John and Edward I were really known to their contemporaries as *Lackland* (or *Sansterre*) and *Longshanks*.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Fr. *bonhomme*, used especially in the appellation Jacques Bonhomme, the personification of the French peasant, and *bonne femme*, rustic matron.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

On the other hand, the *Black Prince*, who for Froissart was "Le Prince de Galles," is first decorated with the adjective by the 16th-century chroniclers Grafton and Holinshed. They may have induced oral tradition to writing, or one of them may have invented the name. The same applies to non-royal figures, e.g. there is almost contemporary evidence for Harry *Hotspur*, but Warwick is first called the *King-maker* in Daniel's *Civill Warres* (1599) "Bluff King Hal" is one of Scott's numerous contributions to historical phraseology:

That Wolsey's voice the blessing spoke.  
More, Sands and Denny passed the joke;  
That bluff King Hal the curtain drew,  
And Catherine's hand the stocking threw.

(Marmion, vi, 38)

Walpole, in 1762, had written of Henry VIII's "bluff haughtiness," giving to *bluff* its then accepted sense of "surly, blustering" (Johnson), so that Scott here, as in many other cases, has actually brought about a change in the meaning of a word.

Among the pre-Conquest kings four are especially well known to us by nicknames, viz. Alfred the Great, Ethelred the Unready, Edmund Ironside and Edward the Confessor. The first of these names is obviously the verdict of posterity. *Unready* is a corruption, first found in Stow (1580), of the epithet *unrede*, applied to Ethelred († 1016) in a text of the early 13th century. Anglo-Sax *unrēd* is an abstract noun,<sup>1</sup> the opposite of *rād*, counsel, wisdom, and the epithet is an ironical substitute for the second part of the king's name which means "noble counsel." The Mid Eng. *rede* survives historically in the name Richard the Redeless, given to Richard II in Langland's poem. The title of Edward the Confessor, first found in William of Malmesbury (c. 1140), is perhaps generally misunderstood. *Confessor* is not used here in the sense of priest, but in the old Church sense of

<sup>1</sup> The early use of abstract nouns as nicknames has resulted in many still existing surnames (Counsell, Charity, Pride, Luck, etc.).

## IRONSIDE

one who avows his creed in the face of persecution, without actually suffering martyrdom

This leaves us Edmund Ironside, whose nickname is recorded in the same text as that of Ethelred. *Ironside*, a natural epithet for a strong and formidable man, was a familiar Mid. English nickname. John Ironside was a free-man of York in 1335. The surname still exists, and there are thirteen Ironsides in the London Telephone Directory.

The compound is most familiar to us in its application to the Cromwellian troopers. It calls up the picture of a grim Puritan dragoon, iron of countenance and garb. As early as 1667 the name was explained from the Cromwellians' "head-pieces, back and breast plates of iron." No doubt this helped, but it is not the real truth. The epithet was originally <sup>1</sup> applied to Cromwell himself and by the Royalists. The Oxford Dictionary quotes, from the *Mercurius Civicus*, Sept. 1644, "Lieutenant-General Cromwell, alias 'Ironside,' for that title was given him by Prince Rupert after his defeat near York" (i.e. at Marston Moor, July 2, 1644). According to S. Rawson Gardner, "It was at Pontefract (Aug. 1648) that Cromwell's men were first called by the nickname of 'ironsides,' a term which had hitherto been appropriated to himself."

The nickname *redcoat*, regularly applied to the British soldier <sup>2</sup> before the khaki age, was also given by the Royalists to the Parliamentary troops. Finally, the slang use of *lobster* for a *redcoat*, now understood as alluding to his colour, started with the application of this name to Sir Arthur Hazelrigg's regiment of dragoons, "so prodigiously armed that they were called by the other side 'lobsters,' because of their bright iron shells with which they were covered" (Clarendon, *History of the Great Rebellion*).

<sup>1</sup> I.e. in connection with the Civil War. *Ironside* was, as already noted, in earlier use in the general sense of a tough customer.

<sup>2</sup> *Bluejacket* is comparatively modern (Marryat). The Tudor word was *tarpaulin*.

## Jumper

Feminine costume has in modern times shown a tendency to appropriate some of the less ceremonial garments belonging to the inferior sex. In the early eighties of last century George du Maurier contributed to *Punch* a drawing which appeared at first sight to depict a scene of regrettable marital violence, but which, on closer examination, showed the mildest and most devoted of husbands assisting his wife to divest herself of her *jersey*,<sup>1</sup> an article of clothing then recently copied from the footballer, who had borrowed it from the fisherman.

I do not know exactly at what date the *blouse* succeeded the *jersey*. Its proper sense in French is a workman's upper garment, and it is sometimes used symbolically of the proletariat as contrasted with the black-coated bourgeoisie. It is curious that, although the word came into use as recently as the latter part of the 18th century, its origin is quite unknown.

Much earlier is the female assumption of the *petticoat*, which, in the Middle Ages, was, as its name implies, a little coat, i.e. a kind of waistcoat worn under the doublet or armour. Shakespeare is our first clear authority for its use as the name of a woman's under-garment and as an emblem of the sex. When, after Tewkesbury, Prince Edward's defiance of the King moves Queen Margaret to wish that his father "had been so resolved," Gloucester retorts:

That you might still have worn the petticoat  
And ne'er have stolen the breech from Lancaster.

(3 Henry VI, v, 5)

The latest male garment annexed by the other sex is the *jumper*. The name has been applied, since the middle of the 19th century, to a kind of heavy jersey favoured by Polar

<sup>1</sup> So called because originally knitted in Jersey, an island without sheep. The football use may have originated at Rugby (see Tom Brown's Schooldays).

## JUMPER

explorers, sailors and gold-miners. It is a nautical elaboration of *jump*, a short coat worn in the 17th century, especially by Presbyterians. This name was also given to a kind of bodice, sometimes called a "pair of jumps." The word is duly registered by Johnson and defined as "a waist-coat; a kind of loose and lumber stays worn by sickly ladies." It is still in dialect use.

*Jump* appears to have been nasalized, under the illogical influence of folk-etymology, from the earlier *jup*, *juppe*, which is Fr. *jupe*. This French word, now meaning skirt, was used in Old French of various male garments. Like many other French words now lost to our language (cf. *garçon*, p. 41), *jupe* was quite familiar in Mid. English. It was the name of an under-tunic or smock worn by men. It was also borrowed by German in the forms *juppe*, *joppe*, explained by Ludwig as "a jupo, jacket or jump."

The origin of the French word is historically interesting. The Crusaders, half-cooked in their metal casing, borrowed from the Arabs the cotton *jubbah*, which, in the form *jibbah*, is now familiar in English books describing Eastern scenes or the habits of the strong, silent sheikh. The popularity of the garment is attested by its adoption in all the Romance languages; with Fr. *jupe* cf. It. *giubba* and Sp. *aljuba*, "a Moorish cassocke or frocke" (Minsheu, 1599), the Spanish form retaining the Arabic definite article. In all the Romance languages we also find the diminutive form, represented in French by *jupon*, a petticoat. This was in the Middle Ages both a light surcoat worn over armour and a rough or padded garment worn under armour. Chaucer says of the Knight:

Of fustian he wored a gypon [*var* jopoun]  
Al bismotered with his habergeon,  
For he was late y-come from his viage

(Prologue, l. 73)

It will have been noticed that every garment so far mentioned represents a conquest rent by the female from the



male. No lady wore *knickers* <sup>1</sup> in the 19th century, or, if she did, the Oxford Dictionary has, modestly refrained from putting the fact on record. Like the proverbial criminal, woman began by robbing the medieval warrior of his equipment and has ended by appropriating the most essential garment of the defenceless urchin.

One more possible derivative of *jupe* remains to be mentioned. Another Old French diminutive, *jupeau*, was adopted in 17th-century English as *gippo*, with the same sense as *jump* (p. 61). *Gippo* became also a nickname for a varlet, presumably from his wearing such a garment, just as a page-boy is sometimes called "buttons." In all probability it is to this *gippo* that we owe the Cambridge <sup>2</sup> *gyp*, a college servant.

## Kaiser

In the most brilliant of his letters, Paul-Louis Courier, referring contemptuously to Bonaparte's assumption of the imperial title, concludes, "Ce César l'entendait bien mieux, et aussi c'était un autre homme. Il ne prit point de titres usés, mais il fit de son nom même un titre supérieur à celui de roi."

The name *Caesar* passed into the Teutonic languages in the age of Augustus, i.e. about the beginning of the Christian era. We find Goth. *kaisar*, Old High Ger. *keiser*, and Anglo-Sax. *cāse*, all used in the sense of Roman Emperor, the Romance languages preferring the derivatives of Lat. *imperator* (Fr. *empereur*, It. *imperatore*, Sp. *emperador*). The earliest English record of the word is in King Alfred's

<sup>1</sup> *Knickerbockers* date from the illustrations to Diedrich Knickerbocker's (i.e. Washington Irving's) *History of Old New York* (1809). *Pantaloon*s are from the costume of one of the companions of *Harlequin* (p. 46), represented as a Venetian dotard.

<sup>2</sup> I have come across an "Oxford *gyp*" in a novel. Possibly he was an interested spectator of that historic race when "all rowed fast, but none so fast as stroke."

## KAISER

translation of Boethius. It is interesting to note that this was the first word to be adopted by the Teutons from Latin, and that, after a life of about two thousand years, it is now presumably extinct.

Charlemagne was crowned Emperor of the West in 800, but his title was of course the Fr. *empereur*. The first German *Kaiser* was Otto I, crowned by the Pope in 962 as "Roman Emperor of the German nation." The Holy Roman Empire came to an end in 1806 with the abdication of Francis II of Austria, to be revived, with a new centre of gravity, in 1871, when the King of Prussia was proclaimed German Emperor at Versailles.

From German the word passed, in the Middle Ages, into the Slavonic languages, and was formally assumed as the Russian Imperial title by Ivan IV in 1547. The old Slavonic form *cesare* (as in *cesarewitch*<sup>1</sup>) has been reduced to *czar* or *tsar* (the French spelling), and its German origin is still reflected in the feminine *czarina*, from Ger *zarin*, with the Teutonic feminine suffix, cognate with Lat. *-ina* (as in *regina*), which in English survives only in *vixen*, the old feminine of *fox*. The Russian feminine form appears in the Anglicized *tsaritsa*.

A curious parallel to this adoption of a personal name as the title of a ruler is furnished by Russ *korol'*, a king, from Old Slav. *kral*, which is taken from the name of Carolus Magnus or Charlemagne. And, to pursue the ups and downs of word-life a little farther, this famous name is simply the Ger. *kerl*, fellow, "churl," made into a personal name in the same way that Gr. *γεωργός*, a husbandman, lit. earth-worker, has given us *George*.

No figure in history has ever loomed so large in the European imagination as Charlemagne. He has even been introduced into astronomy. *Arcturus*, originally one star,

<sup>1</sup> Hence the race established at Newmarket in 1839 and named from the Russian prince, afterwards Alexander II, who was paying a State visit to England.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

but often applied to the constellation Bootes, is Gr. Ἀρκτοῦρος, from ἄρκτος, bear, and οὔρος, guardian, because of its position behind the Bear. 'Chaucer calls it *arctour* and Wyclif *arture*, so that it is not extraordinary that it should have been confused with King Arthur. In medieval romance the legends and exploits of the mythical Arthur were apt to be attached to the historical Charlemagne, so that a star, vaguely associated with the one, was in the end annexed by the other. Already in Anglo-Saxon, Bootes, i.e. the ox-driver, waggoner, is *carles-wægn*, the churl's wain. In Mid. English this "churl," of which the northern equivalent was "carl," was confused with Charlemagne and the constellation became "Charle-maynes Wayne," or "Charles's Wain."

One more metamorphosis of Charlemagne may be noted. His fame extended to Scandinavia and Iceland, which made him a saga hero under the half Latinized name *Karla-magnus*. The Latin adjective was treated as a proper name and given in baptism to the son of Olaf II of Norway, known to history as St Olaf, who died in 1029. This prince became King Magnus Barefoot of Norway and equalled his father's fame, with the result that his name became a favourite throughout the regions in which Old Norse was spoken. Magnusson is still one of the commoner Icelandic names and is reduced in the Orkneys and Shetlands to Manson. An important part of the population of Ireland was Norse,<sup>1</sup> so it is not surprising to find Magnus in early use as a baptismal name in that island, where it is still represented by the patronymic Macmanus.

### Kidnap

Carlyle, in his *Oliver Cromwell*, makes use of the verb to *barbadose*, which, under the Commonwealth, meant to transport convicts as plantation slaves to Barbados. The

<sup>1</sup> "It was the Norsemen who really made Dublin the capital city of Ireland" (Mawer, *The Vikings*, p. 121).

## KIDNAP

great Oliver sent a particularly large consignment after the massacre at Drogheda. These unfortunates were later known as "twenty-pounders," from the usual price at which they were bought by the planters (see Stevenson, *Kidnapped*, ch. 5). There were also unofficial sources of supply, the chief collecting centres being London and Bristol, where the agents were known, as early as 1645, as "spirits." Littleton has "*plagiarius*<sup>1</sup>: a man-stealer, a spirit, who steals other mens children or servants; *per synecd*, he who steals or filches out of other mens writings." Hence our verb to "spirit away," which was earlier simply to "spirit." In 1674 was issued a Royal Proclamation against "the frequent abuses of a lewd sort of people called 'spirits' in seducing many of H M subjects to go on ship-board, where they have been seized and carried by force to H.M. plantations in America." Of about the same date as *spirit* is the verb to *trepan*, earlier *trapan*, originally a name in rogue's slang for a decoy, and probably connected with *trap*.

Both *spirit* and *trepan* were soon supplanted in favour by a new verb. In 1693 Increase Mather wrote of "a servant who was spirited or 'kidnapt' (as they call it) into America," and Bunyan uses *kidnap* in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The earliest record is in Phillips "*kidnappers*: those that make a trade of decoying and 'spuiring away' young children to ship them for foreign plantations." Such children were known in North America as *kids*. During the 18th century *kidnap* retained this special sense. Slavery in North America was the fate intended by his uncle for David Balfour, and is the motif of many other adventure stories.

Although *kidnap* was used in 1925 of the temporary segregation of an adult Communist, we still associate the word especially with children, and, after the serious unemployment among rum-runners and hi-jackers caused by the repeal of the American Prohibition Act, the "kidnapping,"

<sup>1</sup> From Lat. *plaga*, a net.

more simply described as "snatching", of rich people's children became an important industry in the States.

*Kid*, a child, was originally "low slang," according to the Oxford Dictionary, which identifies it with *kid*, a young goat. As our "low slang" is partly of German and Flemish origin, I am inclined to think that the Dutch and German word *kind*,<sup>1</sup> child, has something to do with it. The second element is the "low slang" *nap*, to snatch, now replaced by *nab*. The Dictionary of the Canting Crew (c. 1700) explains "nap the wiper" by "steal the handkerchief." *Nap* is probably of Scandinavian origin; cf. Dan. *nappe*, to snatch. That "kidnapping" was an essentially English industry is clear from the evidence of the early dictionaries, e.g. "*kinderdiebe in England*: plagiaries, spirits or kidnappers, people that would kidnap or spirit away children in England; people that drive a trade of children, inticing 'em away to sell 'em, in order to be transported to the plantations in America" (Ludwig).

### Lion-hunter

At Oxford and Cambridge, up to the time of Mr. Verdant Green, titled undergraduates were distinguished from the untitled by a gold tassel, or "tuft," attached to their caps. The word *tuft*<sup>2</sup> thus became a nickname for these privileged young men, and their sycophants or *toadies*<sup>3</sup> were called *tuft-hunters*.

I imagine that it was on the model of *tuft-hunter*, connoting social snobbishness, that the 19th century coined *lion-*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *kinchin*, from the German *dam kindchen*. "The *kinchins*, my dear," said Fagin, "is the young children that's sent on errands by their mothers, with sixpences and shillings, and the lay is just to take their money away" (Oliver Twist, ch. 42).

<sup>2</sup> *Tuft* is for older *tuff*, from Fr. *touffe* (Old Fr. *toffe*). It is probable that the earlier form survives in the slang word *tuff*.

<sup>3</sup> *Toady* is for *toad-eater*, originally the conjuror's zany, who amused the crowd by pretending to swallow toads, snakes, etc. Fr. *avaleur de couleuvres*, snake-swallower, has the same literal and figurative senses.

## LION-HUNTER

*hunter* to describe a special type of female snob, the kind of hostess who is in despair if unable to exhibit to her friends the latest celebrity or stunt-monger

The Oxford Dictionary's first record for *lion-hunter* is from Carlyle (1840), who uses it in connection with the unfortunate "lionizing" of Burns, but it must have been in colloquial use at an earlier date, judging from the name (1837) of "Mrs Leo Hunter,"<sup>1</sup> at whose fancy-dress *fête champêtre* the Pickwickians appeared, Mr Tupman wearing that "green velvet jacket, with a two-inch tail" that so nearly led to a pugilistic encounter with Mr. Pickwick (Pickwick Papers, ch. 16).

The "lion" pursued by the *lion-hunter* is, according to Thackeray, "a man or woman one must have at one's parties." This sense dates from c. 1700. At an earlier period the "lions" were, as they still are, the remarkable buildings, curious objects, etc., of any locality. Originally they were the royal lions<sup>2</sup> kept at the Tower of London. These animals were naturally regarded as likely to amaze and interest the country cousin, and were usually among the first London sights exhibited to him. As early as the 16th century "to have seen the lions" implied being no raw novice, but a person quite "up to snuff." In the time of Pepys the Tower lions were still a spectacle of surpassing interest. "I took them and all my ladys to the Tower and showed them the lions and all that was to be shown" (May 3, 1662).

## Magazine

An intelligence test on a hundred modern children would, I suppose, show, as the immediate reaction of 99 per cent.

<sup>1</sup> For the identity of this lady see Miss Hesselgrave's *Lady Miller and the Bathaston Literary Circle* (Oxford, 1927).

<sup>2</sup> Lions seem to have been very usual presents to potentates. On Jan. 11, 1681-2, Evelyn saw the audience given by Their Majesties to the ambassadors of Morocco: "Their presents were lions and ostriches."

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

to the sound of this word, the mental picture of a paper cover adorned by the figure of a shapely damsel, in a costume, or lack of costume, more or less appropriate to the season. This literary sense of the word is, however, only about two centuries old, and the shapely damsel, still absent from the serious and historic magazines, is merely a symptom of the wider appeal which results from the existence of an educated democracy.

A *magazine* is a store-house, now usually associated with gunpowder, but in the 16th century with any kind of goods. Fr. *magasin* is still a warehouse, though, from being applied to the great multiple stores, it has come to be a polite substitute for *boutique*, a shop.

*Magazine*, like *arsenal* (It *arsenale*, Arab *al-sinaah*, the workshop), is a reminder of the power once exercised by the Arabs over the Mediterranean. It is Arab. *makhazīn*, the plural of *makhzan*, a warehouse, from *khazana*, to store up. It reached us via Fr. *magasin* or It. *magazzino*. Sp. *almacén* preserves, like many other Spanish words, the Arabic definite article *al*. Torriano has "*magazzino*: a ware-house, a store-house, a magazine," and "*magazzino d'artigliaria*. an arsenal or store-house for artillery," a sense which eventually became predominant in English.

Introduced by the 16th-century travellers and merchant-venturers, the word was, as early as Ben Jonson, used in the figurative sense of treasury, intellectual wealth. In 1731 appeared the first number of the Gentleman's Magazine, described in the Introduction as "a monthly collection to treasure up, as in a magazine, the most remarkable pieces on the subjects above-mentioned." This was imitated in the names of later rival publications, so that *magazine* eventually became a vague term for a periodical.

The more purely literary *review* is of earlier date. Apparently the title was first used in English by Defoe, who began the publication of The Review when in prison in 1704 and continued it till its suppression in 1713. The Annual

## MONITOR

Register (established in 1758) aimed at "uniting the plan of the magazines and that of the reviews"

### Monitor

The Illustrated London News for April 5, 1862, has an alarmist article headed "The Naval Revolution." The greater part of the front page on which the article begins is taken up with a picture of a weird-looking iron monster crashing into the side of an old-fashioned wooden frigate. This monster was the Merrimac, originally a United States frigate, which the Federals, evacuating Norfolk after the secession of Virginia, had partly burnt, and which the Confederates had armoured with railway metals so as to make of her a kind of heavy-gun floating battery with a penthouse cupola. On March 8, 1862, this vessel, renamed the Virginia, emerged from the Confederate Navy Yard at Norfolk and proceeded to wipe out the squadron of five Federal frigates lying off Fort Monroe and in Hampton Roads. Having done this pretty effectually and without loss, she returned to Norfolk.

But the Federals had also been experimenting, and on the evening of the same day a new visitor appeared in the same waters. This was Captain Ericsson's *Monitor*: "Some months previously a Swedish engineer, already highly esteemed for his various inventions, had, though with some difficulty, persuaded the Federal Government to allow him to build a small floating sea-going battery, and had made himself, or his friends, pecuniarily responsible for its success. It was begun in October, launched on New Year's Day, and completely finished in ten days after. And we beg our readers to note the time as well as the cost involved—sixty thousand pounds" (Illus Lond News, loc. cit.).

The *Monitor* was small compared with the Merrimac. She had a deck almost flush with the water and was armed only with two heavy Dahlgren guns carried in a revolving



## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

turret The combat was indecisive, each commander claiming that it was his opponent who first turned tail, and not a man was killed on either side. But the first iron-clad fight in history had taken place, and the Illustrated London News, quoting The Times, wants to know what the Government is going to do about it. "Whereas we had available for immediate purposes 149 first-class war-ships, we have now two, these two being the Warrior and her sister Ironside." <sup>1</sup> A fortnight later the Illustrated London News has a portrait of Captain Cowper Philip Coles <sup>2</sup> and a diagram showing his scheme for cutting down a three-decker and converting it into a "shield-ship"

The name *Monitor* was given by Ericsson himself. Here are his own words in a letter: "The iron-clad intruder will thus prove a severe monitor to these leaders. . . . On these and similar grounds I propose to name the new battery Monitor" It was at once adopted for the particular type of vessel of which the *Monitor* was the first example

Very much the same thing happened later in the case of *Dreadnought* This rather assertive name was borne by one of Queen Elizabeth's ships, and has been in naval use ever since. In 1906 it was given to a new all-big-gun ship, and at once became, like *monitor*, a generic name.

## Nightmare

In connection with the word *mop* (p. 170) I comment incidentally on the gradual transformation of Queen Mab from a grisly hag into a pantomime fairy.<sup>3</sup> As late as 1627, Drayton tells us that—

<sup>1</sup> The only English armoured ships then launched were the Warrior and the Black Prince.

<sup>2</sup> The designer of the ill-fated Captain, on which he went down in 1870 off Cape Finistère.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. "*strix*: an hegge (= hag) or fayrie" (Cooper).

## NIGHTMARE

Mab, his (Oberon's) meery queene by night  
Bestrids young folks that lye upright,  
(In elder tmes) the mare than light,)  
Which plagues them out of measur e

(Nymphidia, vii, 53)

Johnson records this archaic *mare*, and explains it as "a kind of torpor or stagnation, which seems to press the stomach with a weight, the night-hag" <sup>1</sup> The oldest English record of the word is Anglo-Sax *mare*, explained in a 7th-century glossary as *incuba*, i.e. an incumbent hag. The compound *nightmare* does not appear till the 13th century. The Promptorium Parvulorum (1440) gives "*mare* or *nygthmare* epialtes," i.e. Gr *ἐπιάλτης*, nightmare, supposed to mean originally "one leaping upon." The simple *mare* still survives in dialect.

When the comic artist depicts the *nightmare*, he usually represents it as a kind of equine monstrosity. It has even been, rather improbably, suggested that in Edgar's crazy song:

Swithold footed thrice the old (=wold),  
He met the night-mare and hei nine-fold

(Lear, iii, 5.)

"nine-fold" may be an error for "nine foals." At any rate the *mare* of *nightmare* has been popularly apprehended in the familiar zoological sense of the word, not only in English, but also in Dutch, which has substituted *nachtmerrie* (*merrie* = female horse) for the older *nachtmaar*, in which the second component is supposed to mean "demon." This would be, illogically enough, assisted by the fact that in early records the *nightmare* is described as "riding" its victims. A similar inverted kind of logic has given us *bedridden* for Mid. Eng. *bedride*, i.e. a "bed-rider."

The same word is found in other Teutonic languages, e.g. Old Norse *mara* and archaic Ger. *mahr*. The latter is usually replaced in modern German by "*alp* (*die nachtmahre*): the nightmare, a nocturnal choking one suffers lying abed

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *hag-ridden*.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

asleep" (Ludwig). This *alp*, the first cousin of our *elf*,<sup>1</sup> was regularly used by the less confident German newspapers to describe the oppression weighing on their country during World War I, and as regularly rendered in English newspapers by *Alp*, as though indicating a superincumbency of a mountainous nature! Corresponding to our *elf-lock*, plaited in the manes of horses by malevolent sprites, we find Dan *marelok* and Ger. *mahrflechte* (from *flechten*, to plait). The English compound is first recorded in Mercutio's famous fantasy.

This is that very Mab  
That plaits the manes of horses in the night,  
And bakes the elf-locks in foul sluttish hairs,  
Which, once untangled, much misfortune bodes.  
(Romeo and Juliet, 1, 4)

The ultimate origin of *mare* is unsolved. Its regular association with "oppression" has suggested connection with Old Norse *merja*, to crush, but the existence of Old Slav. *mora*, witch, whence Russ. *mora*, nightmare, and of Pol. *mara*, spectre, makes Slavonic origin possible. It is probable that Old Ir. *morrigan*, elf-queen, is also related.

At an early date the word passed into French. In Old French we find *mare*, fabulous monster, whence *cauquemare*, *chauchemare*, etc., now *cauchemar*, nightmare, of which the first element is from Lat. *calcare*, to trample, from *calx*, heel.

<sup>1</sup> An *elf* and an *oaf* seem to be very unlike, but the words are identical, *oaf* being from the Old Norse form. It took its present meaning via that of changeling brought by the elves, hence a clumsy, half-witted child. Spenser's (or E. K.'s) "etymology" of *elf* is almost worthy of a modern "correspondence column": "The soothe is that when all Italy was distract into the factions of the Guelfes and the Gibelyns, being two famous houses in Florence, the name began through their great mischiefes and many outrages to be so odious or rather dreadfull in the peoples eares, that, if their children at any tyme were froward and wanton, they would say to them that the Guelfe or the Gibelyne came. Which words now from them be come into our usage, and, for Guelfes and Gibelyns, we say Elfes and Gobylyns" (Shepherd's Calendar, June).

## PAGAN

I should like to suggest to my etymological betters the possibility that the popular association of the *nightmare* with the equine *mare* may in the end be right. The latter word is Common Teutonic, e.g. Dutch *merrie* (vs), Ger *mähre*, jade, Old Norse *merr* (whence Dan. *mær*), also contemptuous. The corresponding masculine forms are Anglo-Sax. *meorh*, Old High Ger *marah*, Old Norse *marr*. With these cf. Gael. *marc* and Welsh *march*, whence the name of the Celtic king who had horse's ears. The root of this widespread word is quite unknown.

There must have been a time when to Western Europeans the mounted horse was as startling and trampling an apparition as it was to the Mexicans, when they encountered the Spanish conquistadors. The "bogy-man" of the Greek peasant child is still the centaur.<sup>1</sup> The dreaded Scottish *kelpie*,<sup>2</sup> or water-monster, usually appears in equine form, and the names Hengest and Horsa, i.e. stallion and mare, of the adventurers who first flew the White Horse banner off the coast of Britain seem to class the animal with the fantastic and terrifying beasts of heraldry.

## Pagan

Most dictionaries give an erroneous explanation of this word. It comes, of course, from Lat *paganus*, peasant (from *pagus*, a village), which in Late Latin took the sense represented in the Teutonic languages by *heathen* and its cognates. It appears in English in the 14th century, replacing the earlier *payen*, which we had borrowed from Old French (modern *païen*). This form survives in the surname *Payn*, *Payne*.

But why should a peasant be a heathen? Trench is quite clear about it: "The Church fixed itself first in the seats and

<sup>1</sup> See also Theocritus, Idyll 15, for the collocation of *μορμύ*, bugbear, with *ἵππος*, horse.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps related to Gael *colpach*, used of some animals, including colts.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

centres of intelligence, in the towns and cities of the Roman Empire; in them its earliest triumphs were won; while, long after these had accepted the truth, heathen superstitions and idolatries lingered on in the obscure hamlets and villages; so that "pagans," or villagers, came to be applied to all the remaining votaries of the old and decayed superstitions, although not all, but only most of them, were such. . . . *Heathen* has run a course curiously similar" (The Study of Words, 29th ed.).

This theory goes back to the statement of Orosius, a Spaniard (fl. c. 300), to the effect that "Ex locorum agrestium compitis et pagis 'pagani' vocantur," i.e. "From the cross-roads and villages of the rural regions they are called 'pagans'." Even the Oxford Dictionary gives the traditional derivation, with a reference to Trench and the quotation from Orosius. But, if we turn to the "Additions and Emendations," we find a full recantation: "The explanation of Lat *paganus* in the sense non-Christian, heathen, as arising out of that of villager, rustic, has been shown to be chronologically and historically untenable, for this use of the word goes back to Tertullian (c. 202), when paganism was still the public and dominant religion. . . . The explanation is now found in the Latin use of *paganus*, as = non-militant, civilian, opposed to *miles*, soldier, one of the army. The Christians called themselves *milites*, enrolled soldiers of Christ, members of His militant Church, and applied to non-Christians the term applied by soldiers to all who were not enrolled in the army. Cf. Tertullian, De Corona Militis, xi, 'Apud hunc [Christum] tam miles est paganus fidelis quam paganus est miles infidelis.' "

The erroneous view as to the origin of *pagan* was definitely fixed by Gibbon in his long Note to Ch. 21 of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. It is curious that so great a scholar should not have seen the implications of his own history of the word, for he was quite well aware that *paganus* was a term of contempt in the Roman army.

## PAGAN

Indeed, although he alludes to the fact that "the old religion retired and languished in obscure villages," he almost seems, earlier in his Note, to indicate the true origin of the word "The amazing increase of the military order introduced the necessity of a correlative term; and all the people who were not enlisted in the service of the prince were branded with the contemptuous epithet of 'pagan.' The Christians were the soldiers of Christ, their adversaries, who refused His sacrament, or military oath of baptism, might deserve the metaphorical name of 'pagans'<sup>1</sup>; and this popular reproach was introduced, as early as the reign of Valentinian (A D. 365), into Imperial laws and theological writings."

At the Battle of Bedriacum (A D. 69), when the Pretorian guard gave way, their commander apostrophized them, according to Tacitus (Hist III, xxiv, 4), as follows: "Vos nisi vincitis, pagani, quis alius imperator, quae castra alia excipiet?" i e. "Unless you are victorious, you clodhoppers, what other commander or camp will receive you?" Juvenal, describing the privileges and arrogance of the soldier, points out that an assaulted and battered civilian has little hope of redress:

Citius falsum producere testem  
Contra pagani possis, quam vera loquentem  
Contra fortunam armati, contraque pudorem.<sup>2</sup>

(Sat xvi)

Thus *pagan* owes its existence and its meaning to the Roman Tommy, who applied it to the individual whom the French soldier calls *pékín* and whom Private Mulvaney describes as "a lousy civilian."

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gessner, in his *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (1747): "Hinc pagani a veteribus Christianis dicebantur Gentiles, quod Christi milites non essent."

<sup>2</sup> You could sooner produce a false witness against the civilian than anyone to speak the truth against the interests and honour of the soldier.

## Pall-mall

When Charles II returned from his travels, he introduced, or at any rate popularized, some sports which had been little cultivated under the Puritan régime. For instance, though skates made of animals' shin-bones were in use as early as the 12th century, as we learn from William Fitz-Stephen († c 1190), skating as we understand it was due to Charles's sojourn in Holland. On Dec. 1, 1662, both Pepys and Evelyn record their amazement at the skill of the courtiers in St James's Park, skating "after the manner of the Hollanders." *Pall-Mall*, now the name of a street, was once a game. It is of Italian origin, from *palla*, a ball, and *maglio*, a mallet. The first word is of Teutonic origin and is identical with our *ball*, the second is from Lat *malleus*, a hammer. English travellers of the 16th century sometimes speak of it as *palla-malla*. It reached us via Old Fr "*palemaille* a game, wherein a round box bowle is with a mallet stricke through a high arch of yron (standing at either end of an alley one) which he that can do at the fewest blowes, or at the number agreed on, winnes" (Cotgrave).

Like other Continental sports (e.g. golf) *pall-mall* reached Scotland first. In 1568 the unfortunate Mary Stuart not only limited her "dule" for Darnley to eight days, instead of the orthodox forty, but was also seen, during that period, playing one day "richt opponlie at feildis with the palmall and goif"<sup>1</sup>

Blount, writing in 1656, copies Cotgrave's definition, and adds, "This game was heretofore used at the alley near St. Jameses, and vulgarly called Pel-Mel," the "heretofore" suggesting that this frivolity had been suppressed under the Commonwealth. At any rate, it was only after the Restoration that Pepys saw it played. "So I into St. James's Park, where I saw the Duke of York playing at pele-

<sup>1</sup> Calendar of Scottish Papers, 1563-9, p. 558.

## PALL-MALL

mele, the first time that ever I saw the sport" (April 2, 1661).

Evelyn, in his travels, usually made a point of visiting the *pall-malls* or *malls* of the chief French towns, and sometimes playing "a party or two." Thus, at Blois, in 1644: "On Sunday, being May-day, we walked up into Pall-Mall, very long, and so nobly shaded with tall trees (being in the midst of a great wood), that, unless that of Tours, I had not seen a statelier." Many old French towns have a shaded walk called the Mail. Anatole France's L'Orme du Mail would be, in English, The Elm-tree on the Mall.

When the *Pall-Mall* developed into a residential street, the new *Mall* was constructed in the Park itself. Waller has an idiotic poem on the subject.

Here, a well-polished Mall gives us the joy  
To see our Prince his matchless force employ;  
His manly posture and his graceful mien,  
Vigour and youth, in all his motions seen,  
His shape so lovely and his limbs so strong,  
Confirm our hopes we shall obey him long.  
No sooner has he touched the flying ball,  
But 'tis already more than half the Mall,  
And such a fury from his arm has got  
As from a smoking culverin it were shot  
(On St James's Park as lately improved by His Majesty)

One inhabitant of the *Pall-Mall* was Nell Gwyn, whose house stood on the south side overlooking the new *Mall*. The correct Evelyn regretfully witnessed an interview between this lady and King Charles, the latter's name being disguised in the Diary by the decent obscurity of asterisks: "I thence walked with him through St. James's Park to the garden, where I both saw and heard a very familiar discourse between \* \* \* and Mrs. Nelly, as they called an impudent comedian, she looking out of her garden on a terrace at the top of the wall, and \* \* \* standing on the green walk under it. I was heartily sorry at this scene."



## Philistine <sup>1</sup>

The Oxford Dictionary defines a *philistine* as "a person deficient in liberal culture and enlightenment, whose interests are chiefly bounded by material and commonplace things," with the corollary, "but often applied contemptuously by connoisseurs of any particular art or department of learning to one who has no knowledge or appreciation of it; sometimes a mere term of dislike for those whom the speaker considers bourgeois." The general equivalence to some minds of *bourgeois* and *philistine* is curiously illustrated in a quotation from the late Mr. Trotsky's book on the late Mr. Lenin, which I cull from the Daily Express (March 30, 1925). It appears that, when the latter met Mr. H. G. Wells, he realized "his pompous self-satisfaction, his narrowness, his civilized haughtiness, and his civilized ignorance," and, having taken in this picture, he shook his head a long time and said, "What a philistine! What a monstrous little bourgeois!"

This English use of *philistine* is due chiefly to Carlyle and Matthew Arnold, both of whom make use of it repeatedly, though perhaps they do not give it exactly the same sense. Both of them had a spiritual home, or, at least, an intellectual *pied-à-terre*, in Germany, a land which, in the middle of the 19th century, attracted many English minds weary of contemplating the blatant prosperity of their own country and that insufferable complacency born of easy wealth that made Matthew Arnold exclaim,<sup>2</sup> "Philistinism! We have not the expression in English. Perhaps we have not the word because we have so much of the thing."

Through what vicissitudes did the name of a Canaanitish tribe pass in order to end up as a natural description of Mr. Podsnap? The use of the names of savage tribes, such as

<sup>1</sup> See Kluge, *Wortforschung und Wortgeschichte*, pp. 20-44.

<sup>2</sup> *Essay on Heine*.

## PHILISTINE

Goth and Vandal, in the vague sense of uncultivated barbarian, is common. The Roundheads sometimes described the Cavaliers as Amalekites. In the 17th century *philistines* were in English "serjeants, bailiffs, and their crew" (Dictionary of the Canting Crew, c. 1700), and also "drunkards and lewd fellows." In Germany, at the same period, and especially at Jena, *die philister* were the townsmen as opposed to the gownsmen.

It seems possible that the name was originally applied at Jena to the town-guard, with which disorderly students were apt to come in conflict. These watchmen were no doubt, like policemen, hefty fellows, and their nickname was a direct allusion to Goliath, for we find the German word *philister* used as a colloquialism for a tall man earlier than its first record in university slang. The later application to the townee has a curious parallel in *spießburger*, a narrow-minded bourgeois, literally a burgess armed with a pike, i.e. a town-guardsmen, contemptuously used by German students for a townsman many years before *philister* turns up in a similar sense.

The story generally received in Germany, a story recorded early in the 18th century, is that a Jena student was killed by townsmen in a brawl in 1689, that the Rector of the University preached his funeral sermon on the text, "Die Philister uber dir, Simson!" (Judges xvi. 9), and that *philister* thus became in Jena a recognized nickname for a townsman, and was adopted gradually by the other German universities. There is probably some truth in this story, though the most thorough research has not succeeded in actual verification. It is quite certain that the word *philister* was in use at Jena for a member of the town-guard a few years before the date to which tradition assigns the murder, so that, if the sermon was really preached, the text was no doubt selected with deliberate intent. Anyhow, the meaning of *philister* in student language of the 18th and 19th centuries is rather contemptuous than hostile. It corres-

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ponds pretty closely with the use of *bourgeois*<sup>1</sup> among French students.

The modern sense of the word is partly due to Goethe, who repeatedly uses it, in letters and conversations, of the commonplace man without imagination or sense of mystery. Goethe, to whom the word was of course familiar in its established university sense, seems to have given it this new connotation at the time of his closest intimacy with Herder, and possibly under his influence. Schiller also adopted the word with eagerness, and it is to him rather than to Goethe that is due its general acceptance in the sense in which we now understand it.

Its introduction into literature proper belongs to 1797, the year in which Goethe and Schiller ran amok among contemporary authors with their "Xenien," or epigrams, which were sent forth with the injunction, "Fort ins land der Philister, ihr fuchse mit brennenden schwänzen!"<sup>2</sup> Before Goethe's death (in 1832) Carlyle had used *philistine* and *philistinism* in *Sartor Resartus*, but it was Matthew Arnold who gave the word its real currency.

### Pikestaff

One of the most charming features of the modern American language is its great wealth of unexpected and hyperbolic simile. It would occur to few of us to describe a candidate as having about as much chance as an ice-cream-freezer in hell, or to liken a hesitating speaker to a stuffed frog with laryngitis. No simile illustrating "plainness" has more vogue, even now, than "as plain as a pikestaff," the use of which involves probably in most people's minds a double misapprehension.

<sup>1</sup> Francisque Sarcey puts into the mouth of an old "Bohemian" the definition, "Les philistins sont les derniers des hommes, des crétins, des goitreux et, pour tout dire d'un seul mot, des bourgeois."

<sup>2</sup> Forth into the land of the Philistines, ye foxes with burning tails. See Judges xv. 4..

## PIKESTAFF

"Plain as a pikestaff" (1591) had as an earlier equivalent "plain as a packstaff" (1542).

The ant hath cūstumspection, ye have none;

You packstaff plain, the ant crafty and close.

(Heywood, *The Spider and the Fly*.)

We also find "plain as a packsaddle" (1553). The figure did not originally refer to the "obviousness" of the packstaff, but to its simplicity as compared with the numerous official staves borne by functionaries and adorned with appropriate emblems. The packstaff was carried by the pedlar and used as a support when he opened his pack for inspection, while the *pikestaff*, which now suggests the shaft of a pike or heavy spear, meant for Piers Plowman the long ironshod staff of the wayfarer, a kind of alpenstock. Edie Ochiltree, in Scott's *Antiquary*, still carried a *pikestaff* at the beginning of the 19th century. It is evident that either *packstaff* or *pikestaff* would contrast in "plainness" with such symbols of office as that which Mr Grummer flourished before Sam Weller's eyes: "'Ah' said Sam, 'it's wery pretty, 'specially the crown, which is uncommon like the real one'" (*Pickwick*, ch. 24).

Thackeray writes of "calling a pikestaff a pikestaff" as a variation on "calling a spade a spade." This phrase also perpetuates a mistake. The Greeks used "figs" and "bowls" as examples of plain speaking: *Τὰ σῦκα σῦκα, τὴν σκάφην δὲ σκάφην ὀνομάζων* (Lucian). Plutarch tells us of Philip: *Σκαιοὺς ἐφῆ φύσει καὶ ἀγροίκους εἶναι Μακεδόνας, καὶ τὴν σκάφην σκάφην λεγόντας* (*Moralia*, 178 B). *Σκάφη* from *σκάπτειν*, to dig, was used of anything hollowed out, e.g. a trough, bowl, dug-out canoe. Erasmus, translating Plutarch, confused the word, by an oversight, with *σκαφεῖον*, a spade, another derivative of *σκάπτειν*, and rendered it by Lat. *ligo*, a spade or mattock. Accordingly Udall, translating Erasmus (1542), wrote, "Philippus considered that the Macedonians were feloes of no fyne witte in their termes, but altogether grosse, clubbyshe (= clownish) and

rusticall, as they whiche had not the witte to calle a spade by any other name than a spade," and popular speech has perpetuated the error.

## Pipe

The Romans had a verb *pipare*, or *pipiare*, to pipe, cheep, like a young bird. It is obviously an onomatopœic word, like the synonymous Eng *peep*, Ger. *piepsen*, Fr. *péper*. These are not borrowed from Latin, but created in their respective languages by the same imitative instinct; cf. also Gr. *πιπιίειν*. From this verb must have been evolved a noun *pipa*, presumably applied to the fowler's little reed whistle or bird-call. This is one of the cases in which a comparison of the existing derivatives enables us to assume with certainty the existence of a Latin colloquial word of which there is no written record. The original sense of the word appears in Fr. *pipeau*, a bird-call,<sup>1</sup> *piper*, to allure, swindle, *pipée*, the art of deceiving birds by artificial calls "On ne prend pas les vieux oiseaux à la pipée" corresponds to our "Old birds are not caught with chaff."

The essential shrillness of the *pipe* as compared with other wind instruments is still exemplified in the boatswain's *pipe*, which is a whistle, and in "piping hot," which refers to viands still sizzling

He sente hire pyment, meeth and spiced ale,  
And wafres, pipyng hoot out of the gleede (hot embers)

(Chaucer, A 3378.)

As a musical instrument the *pipe* was associated in English with peace and pastoral happiness. Shakespeare contrasts with war's stern alarms "this weak, piping time of peace" (Richard III, i, 1). It was especially the concomitant of the dance, e g. "We have piped<sup>2</sup> unto you and ye have not

<sup>1</sup> Also used, by a not unnatural transition of sense, for a limed twig. *Pipeau* is a diminutive of the older *pipe*, the musical sense of which is obsolete in French.

<sup>2</sup> Vulgate *cantavimus tibus*, from *tibia*, flute, shin-bone, whence Fr. *tige*, stem.

## PIPE

danced" (Luke vii 32), and the question of "paying the piper" sometimes led to difficulties.

Compounds of the *pipe* are *hornpipe* and *bagpipe*. The former was a *pipe* elaborated by means of a horn mouth-piece. "Horne pipes of Cornewaile" are mentioned in the Romaunt of the Rose (l. 4250). Later it became the name of a dance, especially in connection with sailors' merry-makings. The association of the *bagpipe* with Scotland is, so far as the name is concerned, comparatively modern. The Gaels borrowed *pipe* from English as *piob*, from which is derived *piobair*, piper, and *piobaireachd*, the art of playing the pipes, Anglicè *piobrach*. But the *bagpipe* (cf. Ger. *sackpfeife*) was an old instrument in England. We know that the Miller "piped" the Canterbury Pilgrims out of town, and that Falstaff on one occasion was "as melancholy as the drone of a Lincolnshire bagpipe" (1 Henry IV, i, 2).

The "pied piper," who lured the rats from Hamelin, was a Ger. *pfeifer*, for the word penetrated into German at a very early date.<sup>1</sup> This is shown by the initial *pf*-, pointing to adoption before the second (i.e. High German) "sound-shifting", cf. Ger. *pfaster*, plaster, *pfeffer*, pepper, *pfail*, arrow (from Lat. *pilum*, dart). The Ger *pfeife* came into English in the 15th century. It was sometimes called the "Alman (i.e. German) whistle". We have made it into *fife*, with essentially warlike associations. The following 16th-century passage shows a transition form between *pfeife* and *fife*: "Forthwith came a French man being a phipher, in a little boate, playing on his phiph the tune of the Prince of Orange his song" (Hakluyt, x, 129).

The musical sense of *pipa* passed into all the Romance and Teutonic languages, but it is in English that the other derived senses are by far the most numerous. Fr. *pipe* is now little used, except in the sense of tobacco-pipe. This may have developed from the general idea of tube, but I fancy it

<sup>1</sup> Also into the other Teutonic languages, e.g. Dutch *pijp*, Old Norse *pipa*.

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was originally a witticism, the smoking implement being compared to a musical instrument held in the mouth. Otherwise we could hardly explain the similar use of Ger. *pfefe*, which never acquired the general meaning of tube and is used only of a flute or whistle and a tobacco-pipe.<sup>1</sup>

It is in English only that *pipe* has taken that general sense of tube, hollow cylinder, which is expressed in French by *tuyau* and in German by *rohre* (from *rohr*, reed). This sense appears already in Anglo-Saxon and has ramified in an extraordinary way. The various tubular metamorphoses of *pipe* are, with one exception, easy to trace. The exception is the "Pipe Rolls," the great Exchequer Rolls, in which are summarized the "pipes," or accounts, of the sheriffs and others. We have these Rolls preserved from the 12th century onward, and *pipe*, an account, is well recorded in the Anglo-French legal language. Bacon gives a figurative explanation of "that office of Her Majesty's Exchequer, which we, by a metaphor, do call the Pipe, because the whole receipt is finally conveyed into it by means of divers small pipes or quills." But neither metaphor nor drainage had, in the 12th century, attained the refinement which would have made such a figure possible. It is more likely that we have here one more of the innumerable senses of *pipe*, cylinder, which might be easily and naturally applied to a rolled-up parchment.

Combining the musical and tubular senses is the application of *pipe* to the throat or windpipe. We can still speak of a singer as having a "sweet pipe," and athletes apply the name "pipe-opener" to the burst of speed which gets the lungs into going order before the race. *Whistle* is used similarly of the throat, and the expression "to wet one's whistle" is as old as Chaucer: "So was hir joly whistle wel y-wet (A. 4155).

<sup>1</sup> German also has *pfefe*, large cask, our *pipe* (of port); cf. Fr. *pipe*, It. *pippa*, Sp. *pipa*.

## Punch

*Punchinello* came to us at the Restoration. He was introduced by an Italian puppet-player, who no doubt felt that a country just escaped from a long Puritan régime might respond readily to brightening efforts. In the old Neapolitan puppet-play *Pollecina* is a clumsy and cowardly peasant of grotesque appearance, with a trick of blurting out unpleasant truths. It is this aspect of his character that is reflected in the French "secret de Polichinelle," a secret which is really a matter of common knowledge. In England *Punchinello* gradually developed into the "merry outlaw," whose unfailing triumph over all his enemies has given us the phrase "as pleased as Punch." Judy does not appear under that name till the 19th century. Steele writes in the *Tatler* of "Punch and his wife," and Scott, in the first chapter of *The Bride of Lammermoor*, mentions "Punch and his wife Joan."

As to the origin of the name, we find the usual crop of anecdotes, but the truth seems to be that *pollecina* is the Neapolitan form of It. *pulcinella*,<sup>1</sup> a chicken. This word was also applied at Naples to the young turkey-cock, whose beak the mask of the puppet resembled.

Our great authority for *Punchinello* is Mr Pepys, who frequented the new entertainment with real enthusiasm. He refers to it as the "Puppet-play" on Oct. 8, 1662. A few years later the name was well established: "By coach to Moorefields, and there saw Polichinello, which pleases me mightily" (Aug. 22, 1666); "Thence away to Polichinello, and there had three times more sport than at the play" (April 9, 1667); "Thence to the fayre, and saw Polichinelle" (Aug. 31, 1668). One cannot help thinking that the diarist recognized a kindred spirit in the cheerful reprobate and some suggestion of his own connubial existence ("my

<sup>1</sup> A diminutive of *pulcna*; cf. Fr. *poussin*, a chick. The ultimate origin (cf. Fr. *poule*, Eng. *pullet*, *poultry*) is Lat. *pullus*, *pulla*, young of animals, especially birds.



## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

wife, poor wretch!') in the revelations of Mr. Punch's home life.

The name was almost at once corrupted to *Punchinello*, a form also used by Pepys, and then inevitably shortened to *Punch*. In a very short time it became a London colloquialism for a stumpy, thick-set figure. On April 20, 1669, Pepys has some account of a new gun "which, from the shortness and bigness, they do call 'Punchinello,' " and then, ten days later: "Staying among poor people there in the alley, did hear them call their fat child 'Punch,' which pleased me mightily, that word being become a word of common use for all that is thick and short" (April 30, 1669).

The Dictionary of the Canting Crew (c. 1700) has "*punch*. a thick short man, *punch nag*: a short, thick, fat, squat, strong horse " As late as 1820 Washington Irving, in his Sketch-Book, described Garrick as "a short, punch man", but it was especially to horses that the epithet was applied, to be monopolized eventually by one special breed, the "Suffolk punch."

### Raid

No writer ever disinterred so many good old words as Scott. Some of his *trouvailles* have never found general acceptance, others belong to Wardour Street, and a few are odd blunders or ghost-words, due to his misunderstanding his authorities. But a considerable proportion of the words he revived have become an inseparable element of the poetic and picturesque vocabulary, from which some have passed into everyday speech. Among these is *raid*.

It is the Scottish form of Anglo-Sax. *rād*, riding,<sup>1</sup> cognate with the verb to *ride*, and, as we should expect, is chiefly recorded in connection with the moss-troopers of the Border. In Mid. English *rād* became *rode*, now *road*, which had the sense now taken over by its northern doublet. In 1481 Edward IV speaks, in a royal proclamation, of "a rode

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Fr. *chevauchée*, used historically in exactly the same way.

## RAID

made uppon the Scottes at thende of this last somer within their grounde by oure Brother of Gloucestre " This sense of *road* survived up to the 17th century, after which it was expressed by the compound *inroad*

The meaning we now generally attach to *road*, as in Oxford Road, is first recorded in Shakespeare, who makes a carrier complain that his inn at Rochester is "the most villainous house in all London Road for fleas" (1 Henry IV, ii, 1).

*Raid*, a mounted incursion, is not recorded by the Oxford Dictionary between Pitscottie's Chronicle of Scotland (c. 1578) and Scott's Lay of the Last Minstrel (1805). Of William of Deloraine, a "stark moss-trooping Scot," we are told that—

In raids he spilt but seldom blood,  
Unless when men-at-arms withstood,  
Or, as was meet, for deadly feud

(Lay, v, 28.)

*Moss-trooper* (see p. 21, n. 2) is another of Scott's revivals, but, while this word is still confined to romance and history, *raid* has become part of our working vocabulary.

In the latter part of the 19th century it came into general use in connection with descents of the police on gambling hells, coiners' dens, etc., and "raiding the sinking fund" became a recognized device of a perplexed Chancellor of the Exchequer. World War I gave a new meaning to the word. I do not know what journalist first used "air-raid" of the attacks made by the Zeppelins on the civilian population, but I have a note to the effect that this compound is of about the same date as the epithet "baby-killer," used (December 1914) in reference to the bombardment of Scarborough.

When air-raids on London began to be really unpleasant, a large proportion of the alien population took to evacuating the capital, as soon as the evening shades prevailed, and camping in the villages of the home counties, where they

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were commonly known as "raiders." The inhabitants of one village, stricken with compassion at a first invasion, but unable, for many reasons, to offer house-room to the "raiders," provided them with all they could spare in the way of tents, rugs and mattresses. When they arose in the morning, they found that their visitors had folded their tents like the Arabs and silently stolen away, transitively as well as intransitively.

### Rigmarole

The first word-hunter to record *rigmarole* is Samuel Pegge the elder, who defines it (1736) as "a long story, a 'tale of a tub.'" It was in general use in the 18th century, though the lexicographers (Bailey, Johnson, Ash, etc.) completely ignore it. Todd added it to his revised Johnson (1827). He describes it as "colloquial and modern," and explains it as being probably "a corruption of an old expression, namely, of the famous 'ragman's roll,' as a collection of deeds was called, in which the (Scottish) nobility and gentry were compelled to subscribe allegiance to King Edward I of England." Todd also mentions the use of *ragman* in *Piers Plowman*.

His explanation is not far from the truth, but he misses one link in the history of the word. Historically *ragman-roll* is most familiar in connection with the famous Scottish document of 1291 (see Scott's *Antiquary*, ch. 6), but this is not the first occurrence of the word. *Ragman* is found a few years earlier<sup>1</sup> as the alternative name of a statute appointing justices to hear and settle certain complaints and carry out certain inquiries: "Statutum de justiciis assignatis quod vocatur Rageman." The result of this statute appears in the famous Hundred Rolls, compiled by the travelling justices after interrogation of the local representatives. The

<sup>1</sup> The date given in *Statutes of the Realm* is 1276, but Miss H. M. Camm has found the earliest record of the word in 1280 (*Oxford Studies in Social and Legal History*).

## RIGMAROLE

lower part of the membrane for each "hundred" is slit into a number of strips, to which are attached the seals of the jurymen whose names occur in the document. The name *ragman* seems to have been popularly applied to any document having pendent strings and seals. The Chronicle of Lanercost (written c. 1350) tells us that "Instrumentum sive carta subjectionis et homagii faciendi regibus Angliae a Scottis propter multa sigilla dependentia 'ragman' vocabatur."

Two views are held as to the reason for the nickname. Mid. Eng. *ragman* meant a man in rags "ragman, or he that goth with raggyd (*var* jaggyd) clothys" (Promptorium Parvulorum, 1440). It is also, in *Piers Plowman*, a name for the devil or a demon.<sup>1</sup> Some<sup>2</sup> are of opinion that the roll, terminating in a bunch of strips, suggested to the popular fancy the raggle-taggle garb of a man all tattered and torn. Others<sup>3</sup> think that the justices, whose arrival in any district was calculated to alarm uneasy consciences, were popularly regarded as "demons," and that the name was applied to the officials before it became associated with their "rolls." However that may be, a gap still remains between the official *ragman-roll* and the modern *rigmarole*. This gap is filled up by another meaning of *ragman-roll*, which occurs almost as early as the administrative use.

Our medieval ancestors were fond of childish games of the same type as the "forfeits" of the Victorians. In Gilbert's ballad of *The Gentle Pieman* we read

And we pulled the Christmas crackers, each of which contained a motto;  
And she listened while I read them, till her mother told her not to.  
Similarly, medieval society amused itself with a game which

<sup>1</sup> Demons are often described as ragged (i.e. shaggy) in Mid. English. Demon is also the earliest meaning of *ragamuffin* (*Piers Plowman*).

<sup>2</sup> So Miss Camm, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> So M. Charles Bémont, *Le Statut "De Justiciis assignatis quod vocatur Ragman"* (Essays in Medieval History, Manchester, 1925).

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consisted in drawing at random mo'toes, or rather characters, from a *ragman-roll*. The oldest example we have is an Anglo-French manuscript of c 1290 entitled *Ragemon le Bon*.<sup>1</sup> It consists of fifty quatrains, each of which describes the character of one of the players. Wright supposes that "the stanzas were written one after another on a roll of parchment, that to each stanza a string was attached at the side, with a seal, or piece of metal or wood at the end, and that, when used, the parchment was rolled up, with all the strings and their seals hanging together so that the drawer had no reason for choosing one more than another, but drew one of the strings by mere chance, on which the roll was opened to see on what stanza he had fallen." Something similar seems to be suggested by Gower:

Venus, which stant withoute lawe,  
In non certeyn, but as men drawe  
Of Ragemon upon the chaunce.

(*Confessio Amantis*, III, 955.)

Nearly all the quatrains of *Ragemon le Bon* are uncomplimentary, and some of those to which lady participants in the game were expected to listen are of such a kind that it would not be surprising if their mothers "told them not to."

The modern view is that the game was named from the administrative *ragman-roll*. Wright suggests that the opposite is the case: "We can very easily imagine why the name was popularly applied to a charter with an unusual number of seals attached to it, which when rolled up would present exactly the same appearance." I am inclined to agree with Wright, and to suppose that a name already familiar in connection with fun and merriment may have been jocularly applied to legal documents which suggested an obvious resemblance with an instrument of mirth. This seems to agree better with popular psychology. If this is right, the

<sup>1</sup> Printed (1844) by Thomas Wright in *Anecdota Litteraria*, together with a 15th-century *Ragman-Roll* in English. Also, more recently (*Helsingfors*, 1920), by Professor Långfors.

## ROBOT

"raggle-taggle" explanation of the word is to be preferred to the "demon" complex.

Anyhow, it is from the game of *ragman-roll*, and not from the judicial rolls so called, that *rigmarole*, still occasionally spelt *rigmonroll* in the 18th century, is derived. The various "characters" of *Ragemon le Bon* are naturally quite unconnected and incoherent, which is the essential quality of a *rigmarole*. In fact, before it was realized that they had to do with a game of chance, scholars were much puzzled by the lack of relation between the stanzas of what appeared to be medieval poems. It is easy to see how the sense of a series of rambling statements would grow out of the original.

## Robot

Some foreign words reach us in a rather accidental way. If Morier had not written his Oriental tales early in the 19th century, we should not possess the indispensable *bosh*, the only Turkish word in general use in English. *Mascot* came to us from Audran's operetta, *La Mascotte* (1880). Soon after the successful production in London (1923) of Karel Čapek's play, *R.U.R.* (Rossum's Universal Robots), the word *robot*, in the sense of mechanical slave, began to appear pretty frequently in the newspapers and in the works of our younger and smarter novelists. It is now fully acclimatized. A new word is always worth catching and ticketing. In this case there is no difficulty. The Czech word for work is *robota*, cognate with Old Slav. *rab*, *rob*, slave, which survives as *rab* in Modern Russian. But the relations and sense-development of the word throw a little light, as in fact most words do, on human nature and human history.

Work may be considered under two aspects. According to Carlyle, "Blessed is the man who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness," while the refrain of the Song of a Shirt turns the same word almost into a dirge—"Work, work, work!" The distinction is really between the work

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that is congenial or remunerative and that which is dull or ill-required. The first is *opus*, the second is *labor*, to which we will recur later.

According to Kluge, *robot* has existed in German since the 15th century in the sense of *frondienst*, i. e. serf labour, *corvée*. It no doubt came into the language with the subjugation of some Slavonic race <sup>1</sup>

The German word corresponding in general to our *work* is *arbeit*. This is found in all the Teutonic languages, e. g. Anglo-Sax. *earfethe*, Dutch *arbeid*, Old Norse *erfiðe*, Goth. *arbaiths*, and the oldest meaning of all these words is not ordinary work, but laborious toil,<sup>2</sup> or, more frequently, oppression, affliction, distress. The Nibelungenlied begins:

Uns ist in alten mæren wunders vil geseit  
Von heleden lobebæren, von grozer arebeit.<sup>3</sup>

The sinister connotation of the word is due, not only to the natural human preference for short hours and long wages, but also to the nature of the work originally described as *arbeit*. *Arbeit* is a compound of a prehistoric Teutonic name for a serf, cognate with the Old Slav. *rab*, *rob*, from which *robot* is derived. Its original sense was slavery.

Whether the *lab* of Lat. *labor* is ultimately identical with the *arb* of *arbeit* is an unsettled question, but the sense-history of the two words is curiously similar. *Labor* starts from the idea of oppression, perhaps originally that of staggering under a burden. Cooper renders it by "labour, travaile, perill, danger, calamitie, trouble," and Aeneas uses it in the very sense of the *arbeit* of the Nibelungenlied, when he asks Achates, "Quae regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?"

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the history of *slave*, lit. Slavonian, or of Anglo-Sax. *wealh*, slave, lit. Welshman, Briton.

<sup>2</sup> *Toil* also originally meant struggle, suffering. Its few occurrences in the Authorized Version render the *labor*, *laborare*, of the Vulgate. In the corresponding Gothic passages Ulfilas has *arbaiths*.

<sup>3</sup> In old legends many wonders are told us of praiseworthy heroes, of great "toil and trouble."

## RUNAGATE

If we pursue the subject further, we find that *toul* once meant dispute, turmoil. The modern *touler* would hardly recognize himself in the Old Fr "*touilleur* a polipragmon, filthie medler, shuffling or troublesome fellow, one that marres things by a beastlie mingling of them" (Cotgrave). In Scots we find *tulzie*,<sup>1</sup> *tulyie*, a mêlée, scrimmage. Fr. *travail*, work, of uncertain etymology, was originally an instrument of torture, and is still used of a farrier's device for keeping vicious horses still. It has given us both the obstetric *travail* (cf. the synonymous *labour*) and also *travel*, once a most exhausting physical experience.

The conclusion of the whole matter is that man's attitude towards the doom incurred by his first parents has never been one of real enthusiasm.

### Runagate

Med. Latin had an adjective *renegatus*, one who has denied the (Christian) faith. For the illogical use of the passive past participle for the active present participle cf. such words as *circumspect*, *fair-spoken*, Fr. *dissimulé*, deceitful, or Ger. *pfluchtvergessen*, forgetful of duty. *Renegatus* entered English by separate routes and has given four separate forms. The earliest is Mid. Eng. *renegat*, taken straight from the Latin form. It is used by Chaucer (*Man of Law's Tale*) in its original sense of apostate:

How may this wayke womman han this strengthe  
Hire to defende agayn this renegat? (B 934)

The "renegat" had been previously described (l. 915) as "a theef that hadde reneyed oure creance," i.e. he was technically a *recreant*, for the latter word is the Old French present participle of *recreire* (Lat *recredere*), to take back one's belief.

In the 16th century the older *renegat* or *renegate* was

<sup>1</sup> Pronounced *tooly*. The *z* is a printer's substitution for the obsolete letter with a *y* sound; cf. Mackenzie, Menzies, Dalziel, etc.



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replaced by the Spanish form *renegado*, Anglicized as *renegade*, and applied especially to Christian captives of the Moslems who had adopted the Mohammedan religion. It is a common word in Hakluyt, where it is defined as "one that first was a Christian and afterwards becommeth a Turke." Captain John Smith has a good deal to say about these "accursed runagados," who taught the Moors seamanship and rose to wealth and importance in Barbary. Shakespeare uses the Spanish form: "Yond gull Malvolio is turned heathen, a very renegado" (*Twelfth Night*, iii, 2). This is the only occurrence of the word in Shakespeare, nor is any of the three forms found in the Authorized Version, though the Douay Version has "renegade children" for the "rebellious children" of Isaiah xxx. 1 (*filii desertores* in the Vulgate).

Between the introduction of *renegade* and that of *renegade* folk-etymology manufactured the curious *runagate*. *A-gate*, going, on the road, etc., is still good northern English, and, as *runaway*, earlier *renaway*, meant a deserter, and *runabout*, earlier *renabout*, a vagabond, the popular mind apprehended *renagate* as a similar formation and sometimes pronounced it *runagate*. Nashe describes Julian the Apostate as "Julian the runnagate." Captain John Smith prefers the horrible form *runagado* (v s). The change of form gradually affected the sense, so that *runagate* became a rather vague term of abuse, in which the idea of vagabond dominated. It occurs once in Shakespeare (*Cymbeline*, i, 6) in the sense of unfaithful, but elsewhere he uses it for vagabond, outlaw:

*Cloten*. I cannot find those runagates; that villain  
Hath mock'd me.—I am faint.

*Belarius*. "Those runagates!"  
Means he not us? I partly know him; 'tis  
Cloten, the son o' the queen I fear some ambush.  
I saw him not these many years, and yet  
I know 'tis he;—We are held as outlaws.

(*Cymbeline*, iv, 2.)

## SLOGAN

Before the end of the 17th century the perverted sense had quite prevailed over the original. Thomas's Latin Dictionary (1644) has "*runnagete vide* rogue". Littleton (1677) renders it by *erro*, a Late Latin word for a vagabond, but notes also "*runagate* that hath quit his religion· *apostata*". Already in the 16th century the word was applied especially to Cain (Genesis, iv. 12), and it is still in general dialect use in England and America for a gadabout. As a literary word it is now familiar only in the Prayer-book Version of Psalm lxxviii. 6, where the Authorized Version has "rebellious."

### Slogan

The late H. W. Fowler, in that Dictionary of Modern English Usage which is a treasured possession of all educated people, remarks, with regard to the word *slogan*, "Though the great vogue of the word as a substitute for the older 'motto,' 'watchword,' 'rule,' etc., is of the 20th century only, and we old fogies regard it with patriotic dislike as a Scotch interloper, it was occasionally so used earlier; the Oxford English Dictionary has a quotation from Macaulay."

I fancy that if Fowler were rewriting this note to-day, his tone would be somewhat more sardonic. That a "vogue-word" should turn up daily is to be expected, but when, in one issue of our morning paper, we find a Prince of the Church regretting the modern tendency to get drunk on rhetoric, "which usually concludes in a slogan, which more often turns out to be a lie"; a County Director of Education stating that the countryman is "not so much under the dominance of catchwords and slogans as the townsman"; a Midland muner expressing the opinion that it is better to go back to work than "to starve on a slogan"; and sporadic occurrences of the same word in the sporting paragraphs, the letters to the editor, the literary and dramatic news, etc., we begin to be a little tired of the *slogan*.

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Like most other words that have a vogue, *slogan* is a victim of popular ignorance. Neither "Shoot the Reds!" nor "To Hell with the Capitalists!" is really a *slogan*. It is a Lowland corruption of the Gaelic *sluagh-ghairm*, host-yell, army shout, and the *slogan* of the Highlanders was the name of their chief, which was also the name of their clan. Borrowed in a mangled form by the Lowlanders, it became familiar on the Border, the Scotsmen's cry of "A Hamilton!" or "A Home!" being answered by the Southrons with "A Fenwick!" or "A Musgrave!" According to a writer of 1683, the "bluegowns," or licensed beggars, "use still to recite the sloggorne of the true ancient names of Scotland." With the passing of the liveliness which so long characterized the Debatable Land, *slogan* fell into disuse, to be revived, and misused, like some other words, by Scott:

To heaven the Border slogan rung,  
"St Mary for the young Buccleuch!"

(Lay, iv, 27.)

It was, no doubt, from Scott that it was borrowed by Macaulay, who was apparently the first to use it of a party cry in politics. I have a vague impression that its popular use for a catchword sufficiently stentorian to drown argument or criticism is of American origin. Most contemporary English is. Among my cuttings I find "Judge: 'What do you mean by a slogan?' Barrister: 'It is an American advertising term, my lord.' Judge: 'Really! I thought it was the war-cry of a Highland clan.'"

The earliest dictionary in which I have found *slogan* is Worcester's (1860). He explains it as a corruption of "Slug home!" One has heard of a "home-thrust," and also of the American camp-preacher who translated the Biblical words "they left beating of Paul" (Acts xxi. 32) into the homelier vernacular "they quit slugging Paul." Worcester, I may remark, was an American.

The Border form *sloggorn* misled Chatterton, who took it for the name of a kind of trumpet, and added it to his col-

## SOVIET

lection of sham antiques It occurs more than once in his Battle of Hastings.

Some caught a slug-horne ahd an onsett wounde,  
Kynge Harolde hearde the charge and wondred at the sounde.

This absurdity was copied by Browning, whose capacity for perpetrating verbal howlers was almost inspirational.

Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I set  
And blew, "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came."

## Soviet

The Indo-European languages are sometimes divided into the *centum* and *satem* families, according to their treatment of the initial consonant in the general Indo-European name for 100. If we adopt this division, the Slavonic languages will be grouped with the Asiatic or Indo-Iranian branch of the family. This is illustrated by *soviet*, a Russian compound of which the first element is the prefix *so-*, corresponding to the *co-* of *co-operate*, and thus ultimately identical with Lat. *cum*, *con*, with.

It is curious to reflect that before 1916 hardly one Englishman in a million had ever heard of a *soviet* or a *bolshevist*, words which now assault the eye in every newspaper that we open. In fact *bolshevist* is already almost replaced by the more affectionate and familiar *bolsky*.

The *bolsheviki* were originally the majority at the Russian Socialist Conference of 1903, and the word is connected with *bolshintsvo*, majority, from *bolshe*, greater, more. The root does not appear to exist in the Germanic languages. In 1903, and indeed up to 1916, there were also *mensheviki*, members of the minority, from *men'she*, smaller, less, which is cognate with Anglo-Sax. *min*, Ger. *minder*, Lat. *minor*, Gr. *μῆλιν*, etc. The *menshevists* have not survived the strenuous propaganda of their opponents. Apparently they have been "liquidated."

At the time when these verbal novelties first became known in this country, they were often rendered by "maxi-

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malist" and "minimalist," with a mistaken <sup>1</sup> implication as to their meaning. Another Russian term, certainly often misunderstood, was *cadet*, the name of a Russian party now also eliminated. Even modern dictionaries published since World War I identify this word with the familiar French and English *cadet*. It is really one of those acrostic political descriptions which have become so numerous of late <sup>2</sup>. It represents a pun on the Russian pronunciation of K.D., i.e. *konstitucionnaya demokratya*.

*Sovjet* is an old word in Russian. Its current limitation of sense is quite modern. Composed of the prefix *so-* and a root meaning to speak, which appears also in *otvet*, answer, *pruvjet*, greeting, it simply means council, and was in common use long before Russia was made safe for democracy. The root of the word is very old in Slavonic, and the name *vietsche* was applied long ago to a kind of ancient Russian national assembly. To Russ *sovjet* correspond Serbo-Croatian *savjet* and Slovene *svet*.

The same Slavonic prefix is represented in *Sobranje* and *Skupshchina*, the national parliaments of Bulgaria and Serbia. In *Sobranje* the second element is cognate with Russ. *beru*, I gather, assemble, and with Lat. *ferre*, Gr. *φέρειν*, so that the assembly is, not only in fact, but also etymologically, a "con-ference." *Skupshchina* contains the Old Slav. *kup*, heap, whence Serbo-Croatian *skupiti*, to gather, and this *kup* is a distant cousin of Eng. *heap*, Dutch *hoop*, Ger. *haufen*.

## Spick-and-span

Dr. Johnson did not love monosyllables. His explanation of *spick-and-span* is characteristic: "This word I should not have expected to have found authorized by a polite

<sup>1</sup> This origin may, however, be correct. It is accepted by the Oxford Dictionary.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Fr. *cdgliste*, member of the Confédération Générale du Travail (C.G.T.), Russ. *neb* (*novaya ekonomicheskaya politika*).

## SPICK-AND-SPAN

writer. *Span-new* is used by Chaucer, and is supposed to come from *spannan*, to stretch. *Span-new* is therefore originally used of cloth new extended or dressed at the clothiers, and *spick-and-span* is newly extended on the spikes or tenters. It is, however, a low word. On which Horne Tooke remarks disagreeably, in *The Diversions of Purley*, "In *spick-and-span* there is nothing stretched upon spikes and tenters but the etymologist's ignorance." The critic then proceeds, "In Dutch they say *spikspelder-nieu*. And *spyker* means a warehouse or magazine. *Spil* or *spel* means a spindle, *schiet-spoel*, the weaver's shuttle; and *spoelder*, the shuttle-thrower. In Dutch, therefore, *spikspelder-nieu* means new from the warehouse and the loom." This is, of course, even worse nonsense than Johnson's.

The oldest English expression is Mid. Eng. *span-new*, in which *span* means chip, splinter, with a suggestion of clean-cut white wood.

This tale ay was span-newe to biginne,  
Til that the night departed hem a-twinne.

(Chaucer, *Troilus*, III, 1665.)

Alternative words were *brand-new* and *fire-new*, both of metal fresh from the furnace or the mint. Shakespeare uses the latter several times:

Maugre thy strength, youth, place, and eminence,  
Despite thy victor-sword and fire-new fortune,  
Thy valour and thy heart—thou art a traitor

(Lear, v, 3.)

A similar idea is perhaps contained in Fr. *tout battant neuf*, as though new from the anvil or the stamping-die. The usual German word is *funkelnagelneu*, lit. sparkle-nail-new. Earlier we find "*nagelneu*: brand-new, fire-new, spick-and-span new" (Ludwig). This brings us to the *spick* of *spick-and-span new*, now reduced to *spick-and-span*.

*Spick* is not an English word. It was adapted, probably in the 16th century, from the *spik* of archaic Dutch "*spikspeldernieu*: spick-and-span new" (Sewel), which is formed

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from *spyker*, a nail, and *speld*, a pin. We still say "as clean (or neat) as a new pin." With this intensification of *span-new* we may compare the curious variations recorded by the English Dialect Dictionary, viz. *brand-fire-new*, *brand-spander-new*, *brand-spankin'-new*, in the last of which *spankin'* is evidently a kind of portmanteau combination of *spick* and *span*. These two monosyllables stand for the two ideas that run through all these odd compounds, viz. clean metal and clean wood.

### Stor(e)y

From Lat. *historia*, which is Gr. *ιστορία*, from *ιστωρ*, learned, wise, a judge, Old French formed *estorie*. This passed into English as *story*, with the usual loss of the unstressed first syllable. Later on both languages adopted learned forms, *histoire*, *history*. For centuries the two English words, *story*, *history*, existed side by side and were used indifferently. In the 14th-century translation of Higden's Polychronicon we read, "Dedes that wolde deie, storye (i.e. history) kepeth hem evermore." The modern mind is somewhat disconcerted to find a divine like Robert South speaking in a sermon (1684) of "Holy Writ and other stories." The historical sense still survives more or less poetically in *Our Island Story*, *The Story of Creation*, etc., while *history* has often been used of fictitious narrative, e.g. Fielding's *Tom Jones*, the *History of a Foundling*. It was not till the 17th century that *story* definitely assumed the secondary sense of fiction, tale, which by the end of the century passed also into that of fabrication, lie. From the fact that the same fate has overtaken Fr. *histoire*, and that *conte*, a tale, etymologically an exact account (Lat. *computus*), is also used for a fib, the moralist might be tempted to draw unfavourable conclusions as to the general standard of human veracity.

So far all is plain sailing, but the problem is to account for *stor(e)y* acquiring the sense of floor in a building. Skeat

## STUN

derives *stor(e)y*, in this sense, from the past participle of Old Fr. *estorer*. But, although Old Fr. *estorer* means to build (with about a dozen other meanings, all traceable to Lat. *instaurare*), the only substantival sense of *estoree* was a fleet. This etymology, which originated with Wedgwood, is also completely negated by the fact that, two centuries before the first occurrence of *stor(e)y* (of a building), Anglo-Lat. *historia*, *istoria*, is copiously recorded in the same sense, a fact which shows that the *stor(e)y* of a house is identical etymologically with the narrative *story*. This use of Med. Lat. *historia* seems to have been peculiar to England. The Oxford Dictionary suggests that the name may have originally been applied to a tier of painted windows or sculptures on the front of a house. This seems plausible, especially when we consider the very ornate character of medieval houses of the better class.

Med. Lat. *historiare* meant to carve or paint, and this use of the English word, as in Milton's "storied windows richly dight" and Gray's "storied urn or animated bust," goes back to the 14th century. The Oxford Dictionary quotes from about the same date "*una historia octo fenestrarum*," i.e. a pictorial series of eight windows. *Historia* was used, not only of carvings and paintings, but also of tapestry, "*pannus figuris intextus*" (Du Cange), so that the sense of floor may have sprung partly also from the internal decoration (tapestries or frescoes) of the building. Peter Mundy, describing in 1642 the "faire streets of Dantzigh," says, "In these are many faire lofty buildings of brick, outwardly adorned with paintings and windows, and inwardly costly and curious in house furniture, pictures, etts. The seeling and sides off their roomes nettly painted with stories, etts."

## Stun

It sometimes happens that a word is introduced from French into English more than once, the difference in date of adoption being reflected both in its form and meaning.



## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

Thus, Lat. *gentilis*, from *gens*, a race, gave Fr. *gentil*. Adopted early into English, with the usual shifting of accent, this became *gentle*. Reintroduced much later, but before the final of the French word had become silent, it gave *genteel*, with an attempt at preserving the French accentuation. When the French *-l* was lost, it made, in the 17th century, a third appearance as *janly*, *jantee* (now *jaunty*). As *gentilis* is also represented in English by the learned word *Gentile*, we have four separate forms with separate meanings from one original.

The same phenomenon is illustrated by the history of *stun* and its variants. Vulgar Latin formed from the verb *tonare*, to thunder, a compound *extonare*, to express the idea of thunder-striking. This became Old Fr. *estoner* (now *étonner*), which, retaining something of the sense of its Latin original, was used of knocking senseless. Aucassin smote the Count of Valence so vigorously on his helmet that "Il fut si estonés qu'il caï (= fell) à terre." In later Old French *estoner* meant to daze with noise, and it preserved something of its old sense as late as the 17th century, e.g. Bossuet says of Condé, "On le vit étonner de ses regards étincelants ceux qui échappaient à ses coups."

The Norman form of Old Fr. *estoner* was *estuner*. This gave Eng. *astun*, and, with the usual loss of the first syllable, *stun*, in the sense of dazing, physically or mentally. The forms *estouter* and *estoner* also became, retaining the prefix, *astoun* and *aston*. *Astoun* developed a parasitic *-d*, just as Mid. Eng. *soun* (Fr. *son*) has become *sound*, and, in the current form *astound*, has kept much of the original force of the word. German borrowed, through Swiss-French, "*erstauen*: to stand stunned, astonished, amazed, stupified, daunted, perplexed, puzzled, planet-struck, benumbed, surprized or dismayed at a thing" (Ludwig). For *aston* or *astone* was substituted *astony* (cf. *levy*, Fr. *lever*, *occupy*, Fr. *occuper*, etc.), which, like *astound*, preserved the "stunning" sense till the end of the 16th century. Cooper defines Lat.

## TURNPIKE

*torpedo*, the electric ray or cramp-fish, as "a fish that hath the nature to make the handes of them that touche it to be astonyed, though he doe it with a long pole."

English verbs in *-ish* are derived from French verbs in *-ir*, *-iss-*, e.g. *nourish* from *nourrir*, *nourriss-*. There was a tendency to apply this ending where it was not justified, e.g. we have *distinguish* substituted for older *distingue*, Fr. *distinguer*. So, in the 16th century, *astony*, which is still preserved in the Authorized Version, began to have as a rival *astonish*. Palsgrave has, "I astonysshe with a stroke upon the head: *jestourdis* (modern *j'étourdis*).". In the Authorized Version *astony* and *astomish* still express a very much stronger emotion than surprise: "The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished [Vulgate, *pavent*] at his reproof" (Job xxvi. 11).

The use of *stunning* as an admirative epithet belongs to the age of Dickens and Thackeray. It is characteristic of the Anglo-Saxons that they usually express excellence or size by words descriptive of noise (*thundering*, *rattling*, *clinking*) or physical ill-treatment (*ripping*, *thumping*, *spanking*, *strapping*, *whopping*). In *stunning* the two ideas appear to be combined: "'Twopence-halfpenny,' says the landlord, 'is the price of the Genuine Stunning ale'."

"'Then,' says I, producing the money, 'just draw me a glass of the Genuine Stunning, if you please, with a good head on it' " (David Copperfield, ch. 11).

## Turnpike

Mr. Weller senior, who had the cockney's objection to first syllables, once threatened, in a moment of depression, to keep a "pike": "Say good-bye to your father, Samivel. I dewote the remainder of my days to a pike" (Pickwick, ch. 56). We know from his philosophic conversation with Mr. Pickwick on the Ipswich coach that he regarded "pike-keepers" as disappointed men who "rewenge themselves on mankind by takin' tolls" (ibid., ch. 22). The letter in which he announced the demise of the second Mrs. Weller is

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couched in the language of his calling. "Just as she was a turnen the corner my boy she took the wrong road and vent down hill with a welocity you never see and notwithstanding that the drag was put on drektly by the medikel man it wornt of no use at all for she paid the last pike at twenty minutes afore six o'clock yesterday evenin" (ibid., ch 52). Mr. Weller alludes to those barriers at which, within the memory of many now living, tolls were regularly levied for the upkeep of the roads. We still use "turnpike road," or simply *turnpike*, for a main road. George Eliot, in *Silas Marner*, describes Raveloe as "nestled in a snug well-wooded hollow, quite an hour's journey on horseback from any turnpike."

*Turnpike*, like its former synonym *chevaux-de-frise*, was originally a military term. It is formed from *turn* and *pike*, in the sense of a heavy spear, and is recorded from c. 1420. The *Gentleman's Dictionary* (1705) has "*chevaux de frise* or *turnpikes*. spars of wood about a foot diameter, and ten or twelve long, cut into six faces, and bored through; each hole is armed with a short spike shod with iron at each end, about an inch diameter, 6 foot long, and 6 inches distant one from another, so that it points out every way, and is proper for stopping small overtures (= openings), or to be placed in breaches. they are likewise a very good defence against horse." Traditionally the *chevaux-de-frise*, still to be seen on the walls of prison-yards, were invented by the Netherlanders to make up for their lack of cavalry against the Spaniards. The Dutch name was *vriessse paerden*, Frisian horses, with which cf. archaic Ger. *friesische reuter* (= *reiter*, troopers). The beam revolved if the spikes were grasped.

The *turnpike* in its later and more pacific sense was apparently a 17th-century introduction. It had a central support on which it revolved horizontally and was in fact a turnstile. It is defined by Johnson as "a cross of two bars armed with pikes at the ends, and turning on a pin, fixed to hinder horses from entering." Later it became the gate

## UPROAR

which some of us remember The *turnpikes* have disappeared from the public roads, but at many spots may still be seen the small buildings formerly inhabited by those moiose officials of whom Mr. Weller says that, "If they was gen'lem'n you'd call 'em misanthropes "

### Uproar

This word occurs seven times in the Authorized Version in the sense of civic commotion, popular disturbance: "Not on the feast-day, lest there be an uproar [Vulgate, *tumultus*] among the people" (Mark xiv. 2). This is its true meaning, and it has nothing to do with the roaring of the lion,<sup>1</sup> though it is of this word that we think when we speak of "uproarious laughter "

Mid. English had *rore*, disturbance, usually in the phrase "in (or on) a rore " It was borrowed early from Dutch "*roer*: trouble, commotion, sedition, or tumult" (Hexham, 1672), which corresponds to the verb "*roeren*· to touch, stir, or meddle with" (ibid.), cf Ger. *ruhren*, to stir, and Anglo-Sax. *hrēran*, the latter of which survives in dialect *rear-mouse*, i.e. flutter-mouse or bat. The Promptorium Parvulorum (1440) has "*rore*, or *turbyle amonge pepel*· disturbium, tumultus, turbacio, perturbacio, comminacio " Miranda uses it to her father·

If by your art, my dearest father, you have  
Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.  
(*Tempest*, i, 2.)

It was naturally associated with the older *roar*, the lion's voice, and it would be hard to say how much of each word enters into Hamlet's address to Yorick's skull: "Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table in a roar?" (Hamlet, v, 1).

The Dutch verb also passed into Mid. English with the sense of busy activity, chaffering, barter, and still survives

<sup>1</sup> This is from Anglo-Sax. *rārian*.

in "roaring trade." Lastly, the "roaring boys," or Mohocks, of the 17th century, who succeeded the "roalers" of the 16th century, were not named from their voices, but from their tumultuous behaviour. As early as 1311 one Simon Braban (evidently a Fleming) was indicted in London as "noctivagus et rorere," i.e. as a night-prowler and disturber of the peace.

Tyndale appears to have been the first Bible translator to use *roar* for disturbance, e.g., where the Authorized Version (Acts xix 29) has "filled with confusion" [Vulgate, *impleta confusione*], he has "on a roore." But for *sedition* or *tumultus* he felt the need of a stronger term, and it is to him that we owe the introduction of *uproar*, coined in imitation of Dutch "*oproer*: uprore, tumult, commotion, mutiny, or sedition" (Hexham), or the synonymous Ger. *aufruhr*, as used by Luther. Shakespeare employs *uproar* in the original Biblical sense and even makes it into a verb:

Nay, had I power, I should  
Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,  
Uproar the universal peace, confound  
All unity on earth

(Macbeth, iv, 3)

## Wanton

All writers on words are tempted to compare the uncertainty of word-life with that of human life and to wonder why one is taken and another left. It is possible to give a reasonable explanation of the ordinary phenomena of linguistic growth, but linguistic decay remains very much a mystery. We cannot even say that the verbal struggle for life results in the survival of the fittest, for it is often the most expressive and most vigorous terms that disappear from the literary language, to linger for a time in the dialects and then drop quite out of use. The same mystery attends the fate of prefixes and suffixes. The word *answer* is the only English survival of a Teutonic prefix still very flourishing in German as *ent-* and cognate with Lat. *anti*

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and Gr *ἀντί* It is, Anglo-Sax. *andswarian*, to swear back, with which cf Lat *respondere*, to pledge in return. The original strong sense survives in legal language. In *midwife* we have the only instance of Anglo-Sax *mid*,<sup>1</sup> with, cognate with Ger. *mit*. The term means woman (cf. fishwife) standing by, cf. Ger. *beifrau* and Lat. *obstetrix*, from *obstare*, to stand over against. Shakespeare uses *inchmeal* (*Tempest*, ii, 2), and *limb-meal* (*Cymbeline*, ii, 4), but out of the large number of Anglo-Saxon and Mid English compounds found with this useful suffix we have kept only the hybrid *piecemeal*.

A prefix common to the Teutonic languages is the *wan-* of *wanton*. There are still about a dozen Danish words in *van-*, while Dutch has fewer than half a dozen in *wan-*. German has two only, and *wanton* is the sole English survivor. The prefix means "lacking." It is related to *want*, probably also to *wane* and to Lat *vanus*, empty. We find it in Ger. *wahnsinn*, madness, for older *wahnwitz*, in which, by folk-etymology, *wahn*, delusion, has been substituted for the true prefix.

Anglo-Saxon compounds in *wan-* are pretty numerous, but only one of them, *wanspēd*, ill speed, poverty, survived into the Mid English period, the rest being displaced by *un-* forms. *Wan-* seems, however, to have kept its vitality in the north and to have formed new compounds, the most widely used of which is *wanchancy*, uncanny, ill-omened, etc., common in Scottish vernacular literature.

Wae worth that man wha first did shape  
That vile, wanchancey thung—a rape!<sup>2</sup>  
It maks gude fellows gurn an' gape  
Wi' chokin' dread.

(Burns, *Puir Maile's Elegy*)

<sup>1</sup> The replacement of this word by *with*, which meant against, in opposition to (e.g. *withstand*), is curious. The *mid-* of other compounds means "middle," e.g. *midshipman*, originally stationed amidships, or *midriff* from Anglo-Sax *hrif*, belly.

<sup>2</sup> Rope.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

Of several Mid. English formations in *wan-* which have had a literary life the most familiar is *wanhope*, despair (cf. Dutch *wanhoop*). This is used by<sup>1</sup> Chaucer:

Wel ought I sterve <sup>1</sup> in wanhope and distress,  
Farwel, my lif, my lust and my gladnesse.

(A. 1249.)

and is abundantly recorded, in its proper sense, up to the middle of the 16th century, after which it is wrongly read as *wan* (= faint, feeble) *hope* and misused accordingly. It is not found in Shakespeare or the Authorized Version and became obsolete in the 17th century

*Wanton* represents Mid. English *wantowen*, or an unrecorded Anglo-Sax *wantogen*, the second element being the past participle of *tēon*, to drag, draw, which, like its German cognate *er-ziehen*, meant also to educate. *Wantowen* had a rival *untowen*, with which cf. Ger. *ungezogen*, naughty. It is impossible to say why in this one case *wan-* successfully withstood the pressure of *un-*, but its isolated survival provided a puzzle for the early etymologists, and gave Minsheu (1617) the opportunity for one of his most imaginative explanations: "*wanton*: *quasi* want one, i.e. *carens uno vel una*." Perhaps its resistance to analysis fitted it to receive a great many shades of meaning and made it a favourite with Shakespeare, who employs it in every sense from frolicsome to lascivious. In the Authorized Version it is always connected, as by Minsheu, with impudicity, but the earlier translators used it more freely, e.g. the "backsliding heifer" of Hosea iv. 16 is in Coverdale a "wanton cow."

## Wassail

The story that Rowena, the fair daughter of Hengest, used the phrase *wes heil*, be hale, in handing the cup to Vortigern, is first found in Geoffrey of Monmouth, whose *Historia Britonum*, compiled from Nennius (fl. c. 800), was probably finished c. 1150. Geoffrey's work was translated

<sup>1</sup> Die.

## WASSAIL

into English by Layamon (c. 1200), and it is in Layamon that we first find the word in an English context: "Laverd king was hail," along with Vortigern's reply, "drinc hail." Somewhat earlier, Wace, in his *Roman de Rou*, had used both words in a French context in describing the revelry in the English camp the night before Hastings.

The Rowena story is an anachronism. There is no trace of these drinking salutations in early Teutonic literature. The practice seems to have arisen in England, and, as the early forms of *wassail* suggest, among the Danish part of the population. The Oxford Dictionary quotes an authority of c. 1190 to the effect that the English students at the University of Paris were too much addicted to *wessail* and *dringail*.

*Wassail* very quickly acquired the sense of the medium used in health-drinking, especially the spiced ale of Yuletide. It also became a verb, surviving in the "Here we come a-wassailing" of the old carol. It is now only a picturesque or playful archaism. One has heard individuals described as "rather too fond of the wassail-bowl."

The Anglo-Saxon greeting *wes hāl*, be hale, and the corresponding Old Norse expression are both recorded, though not in reference to health-drinking. *Hāl wes*<sup>1</sup> *thū* is used in the Anglo-Saxon Gospels to render the *Ave!* of the Vulgate. *Heil* is similarly used in German, and Goth. *hails* by Ulfilas. The earliest records of *wassail* show that the second element was not Anglo-Sax. *hāl*, but the cognate Old Norse *heil*.

The Old Norse form has survived in the nautical *hail*, the greeting of ships passing one another at sea. Captain John Smith (1626) spells it *hale*: "Dowse your top sayle, salute him for the sea; Hale him, whence your ship?" It is easy to see how the expression "to hail from" arose from this exchange of marine courtesies.

The curious spelling *whole* rather disguises its connection

<sup>1</sup> Imperative of *wesan*, to be.



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with the words already mentioned. It is for earlier *hole*, *hoole*, representing Anglo-Sax *hāl*,<sup>1</sup> which had the double sense of healthy and complete. The Promptorium Parvulorum (1440) glosses *hool* by "sanus, integer." The former sense still survives, though currently replaced by *healthy*, in Biblical language and in *wholesome*. The spelling with *wh-* of words beginning with *ho-* is recorded in the 15th century, and appears to correspond to an altered pronunciation still traceable in dialect. Tyndale has *wholy* for *holy*. In standard English the changed spelling, with now silent *w-*, survives only in *whole* and another word not used by the best people. *Hale*, used especially in collocation with *hearty*, represents the north-country pronunciation. *Heal* is Anglo-Sax. *hēlan*, to make hale, and, corresponding to *weal* and *wealth*, English once had *heal* and *health*.

Daun John answerde, "Certes I am sayn (= glad)  
That ye in hecle are comen hom agayn "

(Chaucer, B. 1539.)

The Romans used one and the same word for bodily and mental health, as in Juvenal's "mens sana in corpore sano," which has been explained as a healthy mind in a body that can say "No!" The converted Teutons recognized a similar connection between the body and the soul. They rendered *salus* by their word for physical wholeness. *Health*, used by Wyclif for "salvation" in the Nunc Dimittis, still occurs in the same sense in the Authorized Version, e.g. Psalm lxxvii 2, and in the Book of Common Prayer, e.g. "There is no health in us." They used for Saviour the present participle of the verb *heal* (this survives in Ger. *Heiland*), and an adjective meaning "healthy" for Lat *sacer*, *sanctus*. Thus *holy* is Anglo-Sax. *hālig*, with which cf. Ger. *heilig*, Old Norse *heilagr*, Goth. *heilags*.<sup>1</sup> These words are pre-Christian in their religious sense, and it is thought that the idea of "integer" may have passed into that of proof against evil spirits.

<sup>1</sup> Not used in the Gothic Bible, but found in an inscription.

## WEIRD

Finally, from the adjective *hālig* were formed a noun *hālga*, saint, and a verb *hālgian*, to make holy. Via Mid. English forms in *halw-* these both became *hallow*. We still speak of *Hallowe'en* and *All Hallows*. Chaucer uses *hallow* of a saint's shrine

Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages  
And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes,  
To ferne (= distant) halwes, kowthe<sup>1</sup> in sondry londes.  
(Prologue, l. 12)

## Weird

Our trick of using a noun as a qualifying epithet, as in "choice fruit" or "prize idiot," results in the creation of new adjectives. From the compound *gamecock*, i.e. cock of the game (cock-fighting), has been evolved an adjective meaning plucky, intrepid. I recently heard a cross-word "fan," unversed in word-history, protest against the unfairness of equating *destiny* and *weird*. The latter, in its current adjectival sense, was worked to death in the last decade of the 19th century, its popularity resulting, I fancy, from the untiring eagerness with which the schoolgirl prosecutes her search for new and expressive epithets.

Worcester's English Dictionary (1859) explains *weird* as "skilled in, or using, relating to, or derived from, witchcraft," with no reference to its use other than as a noun (1522) in Gavin Douglas. It is not in Johnson (3rd ed. 1765), nor in Bailey (2nd ed. 1736). Todd added it to his revised edition of Johnson (1827). He explains it as "skilled in witchcraft," but refers to its use by Gavin Douglas to render the Lat. *fatum*, destiny. He also gives a quotation from Macbeth. Skinner's Etymologicon (1673) includes it in a vocabulary "*Vocum antiquarum Anglicarum, quae jam ante parentum aetatem in usu esse desierunt.*" He correctly explains it as destiny, with the remark that it occurs "*passim apud Dug. in Æn. Virg.*"

From all this we may infer, my dear Watson, that *weird*,

<sup>1</sup> Known; cf. *uncouth*.

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destiny, was a familiar word in early modern Scots; that, apart from Macbeth, it had disappeared from Elizabethan literary English; that the 18th century, which knew little of Shakespeare, knew not *weird*; that it came back into the poetic language of the 19th century transformed into an adjective, and that, in the latter part of that century, its meaning changed from witch-like to fantastic, odd, queer.

If we go back to the beginning of its history, we find that Anglo-Saxon had a verb *weorþan*, to happen, to become. This verb is common to the Teutonic languages (Dutch *worden*, Ger *werden*, Old Norse *verða*, Goth. *warþan*), and is cognate with Lat. *vertere*, to turn. It survives in the poetic "Woe worth the day" (Ezekiel, xxx 2). There was a related noun *wyrd*, destiny, used by Ælfric Grammaticus and by King Alfred. The corresponding Old Norse *urthr* was the name of one of the Norns, the Fates of Scandinavian mythology. The Anglo-Saxon word persisted in Mid. English, and Chaucer speaks of "the wrdes that we clepen destinee" (Legend of Good Women, l. 1580); Gower (Confessio Amantis, Book iii) makes Nestor say that "it were a wonder wierd,<sup>1</sup> to sien a King become an hierd."

*Weird* dropped out of early Modern English, perhaps because of the competition of the borrowed words *fate* and *destiny*, but survived in the north. Shakespeare's source for Macbeth was John Bellenden (†1587), who translated into the vernacular Hector Boece's *Historia Scotorum*. In it we read, "Makbeth and Banquho met be ye gait thre women clothit in elrage and uncouth weid (= dress, cf widow's weeds). They were jugit be the pepill to be weird sisters." Hence Shakespeare's use of the term in Macbeth, where "weird sisters" occurs repeatedly. That it was an unfamiliar word may be inferred from the fact that in the oldest editions it is printed *weyard* or *weyward*, is both a mono-

<sup>1</sup> To a modern ear and eye this suggests "a weird wonder," but it means "a wonderful destiny." Mid. English had an adjective *wonder* and an adverb *wonders*, now corrupted to *wondrous*.

## WERWOLF

syllable and a disyllable,<sup>1</sup> and is even replaced by *wizard* in the later Folios )

Did Shakespeare, but, for whom the word would have remained dead and buried, realize that Bellenden's "weird sisters" were "fate sisters," just as we now speak of an "oil magnate" or a "cricket blue"? This must remain uncertain. At any rate the early 19th-century students of Shakespeare took *weird* for an adjective, and its original sense was lost. Except in one phrase. From Anglo-Sax. *drēogan*, to perform, endure, resulted a common Mid. English verb *dree*. This disappeared from literary use, but persisted in northern dialect, e.g. it is used by Mrs. Gaskell in her Lancashire tale, *Mary Barton*. In Mid. English it was commonly coupled with *weird*, destiny, and Scott reintroduced the phrase into literature: "Tell him the time's coming now and the weird's dree'd and the wheel's turning" (*Guy Mannering*, ch. 46).

## Werwolf

It is difficult for a modern to realize what a place of terror the world was for the ancients and the Middle Ages, as it still is for children, savages and the uneducated rich<sup>2</sup>.

Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, sagas,  
Nocturnos lemures, portentaque, Thessala rides?

(Horace, Ep. II, 11, 208.)

Of all the superstitions which haunted primitive man, none is more widespread or more gruesome than that of the man-beast, whether *vampire* or *werwolf*.

The *vampire* does not, it is true, assume beast form, but it lives on human blood. The word reached Western Europe in the 18th century from Hungarian. Pegge, the famous antiquary, observes somewhat naively, "The accounts we

<sup>1</sup> "Saw you the we-ird sisters?"—"No, my lord" (*Macbeth*, iv, 1).

<sup>2</sup> The frequenter of the doss-house has no objection to cubicle 13, but hotels and steamship companies that cater for the wealthy commonly omit this number from their rooms and cabins.

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have of the Hungarian vampires are most incredible.' The Hungarian word is from Slavonic and the Slavs got it from Turkish. In our own day the name has been applied to a type of film-star, now usually *vamp*,<sup>1</sup> which apparently came into use too late for inclusion in the Oxford Dictionary. *Vampire* is still used figuratively and *werwolf* had a temporary vogue at the end of World War II in connection with a German "resistance movement" which did not materialize.

The *werwolf* is a Common Teutonic possession. The etymological explanation given by Verstegan, in his *Restitution of Decayed Intelligence* (1605), is substantially correct. "*Were*<sup>2</sup> our ancestors used somtyme in steed of *man*, yet should it seeme that *were* was moste comonly taken for a married man. But the name of *man* is now more known and more generally used in the whole Teutonic tounge than the name of *were*. *Werewolf*: this name remaineth stil known in the Teutonic and is as much as to say 'man-wolf,' the Greeks expressing the very lyke in *Lycanthropos* (Gr. Λυκάνθρωπος, lit. wolf-man). Ortelius, not knowing what *were* signified, because in the Netherlands it is now cleane out of use, except thus composed with *wolf*, doth misinterpret it according to his fancie. The *were-wolves* are certaine sorcerers, who, having anoynted their bodyes with an oyntment which they make by the instinct of the Devil, and putting on a certaine enchanted girdel, do not only unto the view of others seeme as wolves, but to their own thinking

<sup>1</sup> Another *vamp*, part of a shoe, is really, despite its brevity, a compound word. It is short for *vampy*, Old Fr. *avant-pie*, front part of the foot. From it was formed a verb to *vamp*, to patch up (a boot, or a literary composition). By the 18th century this was used of "patching up" a musical accompaniment.

<sup>2</sup> This should be *wer*, a word of wider diffusion in the Aryan languages than *man*. It is found in all the Teutonic languages, and is cognate with Lat. *vir*, Gaelic *fear*, Welsh *gŵr*, Sanskrit *vīra*. *Wer* died out in early Mid-English, but survives historically in *wergild*, payment for having killed a man.

## WERWOLF

have both the shape and nature of wolves, so long as they weare the said girdel. } And they do dispose themselves as very wolves, in wurring and killing, and moste of humaine creatures. Of such sundry have bin taken and executed in sundry partes of Germanie and the Netherlands. One Peter Stump, for being a were-wolf, and having killed thirteen children, two women, and one man, was at Bedbur not far from Cullen (Cologne) in the yeare 1589 put unto a very terrible death. . . . He dyed with very great remorse, desyring that his body might not be spared from any torment, so his soule might be saved. The *were-wolf* (so called in Germanie) is in France called *loupgarou* "

A much earlier authority than Verstegan is quoted by Falk and Torp, s.v. *varulv*, "Vidimus enim frequenter in Anglia per lunationes homines in lupos mutari, quod hominum genus *gerulfos* Galli nominant, Anglici vero *were-wolf* dicunt: *were* enim Anglice 'virum' sonat, *ulf* 'lupum' (Gervase of Tilbury, 12th century). The Teutonic word passed into Old French as *garou*,<sup>1</sup> and, when the real sense of the word was obscured, was elaborated into the pleonastic "*loup-garou*· a mankind wolfe" (Cotgrave).

The disappearance of the simple *were* led Mid. English writers to explain the first syllable as *ware*, and, as late as 1576, Turberville tells us, "Such wolves are called 'war-wolves,' bicause a man had neede to be ware of them." A similar idea seems to account for archaic Ger. *wehrwolf*, associated with the cognate *wehren*, to protect, take heed.

Verstegan does not appear to recognize the superstition as one then existing in England. Although we went on burning witches and warlocks up to the 18th century, we appear to have found the *werwolf* too steep.<sup>2</sup> The Oxford

<sup>1</sup> Marie de France says, "*Garwolf* (? *garwolf*) l'apelent li Normand " Teutonic *w*- regularly becomes Fr *g*- or *gu*-.

<sup>2</sup> This was perhaps partly due to the disappearance of the wolf from England, while it was still a terror to Continental countries.

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Dictionary finds practically no record of the word in the 17th and 18th centuries. The superstition is not mentioned in Bourne's *Antiquitates Vulgares* (1725) or in Brand's *Observations thereon* (1776). Our *werwolf* is, in fact, really the German word, reintroduced c. 1800 in connection with the craze for "Gothic tales" of the flesh-creeping type. Scott writes in 1816, of "all the German superstitions of nixies, oak-kings,<sup>1</sup> werwolves, hobgoblins, black spirits and white, blue spirits and grey" (*Antiquary*, ch. 25).

### Wiseacre

The workings of folk-etymology are mysterious. It is natural that a foreign and unfamiliar word should be twisted into something that looks native and intelligible. Our great-grandfathers were more familiar with *sparrow-grass* than with *asparagus*. "*Sparrow-grass* is so general that *asparagus* has an air of stiffness and pedantry" (*Walker's Pronouncing Dictionary*, 1791). But why the *-acre* of *wiseacre*? I can only conjecture that it may have been suggested by the frequent occurrence of this word in familiar surnames, such as Goodacre,<sup>2</sup> Oldacre, Greenacre, etc., and especially Blackacre and Whitacre, once stock names for fictitious litigants.<sup>3</sup>

*Wiseacre* came to us from obsolete Dutch *wys-segger*, as though "wise sayer." The first English lexicographer to list it is Blount (1656), who explains it as "one that knows or tells truth, but we commonly use it *in malam partem*, for a fool." It occurs, however, in Cotgrave as one of the equivalents of "*fol*: a foole; asse, goose, calfe, dotterell, woodcocke; noddie, cokes, gooscap, coxcombe, dizard, peagoose, ninnie, naturall, ideot, wisakers (*sic*)."<sup>4</sup> Kilian

<sup>1</sup> Probably the *Erlking* (p. 47, n. 3) is meant.

<sup>2</sup> In such names *acre* = field.

<sup>3</sup> Widow Blackacre, in Wycherley's *Plain Dealer*, is a "petulant, litigious widow."

## WISEACRE

(1620) gives the Dutch form as a synonym of "*waer-segghe* (= truth-sayer). *augur*, *divinus*, *praesagus*, *fatiloquus*, *fatidicus*, *hariolus*, *vates*, *mantes*, *haruspex*, *cxstipex*, *metascopus*, *chiromantis*, *chiromanticus*, *physiognomus*," i.e. a general dealer in magic and spells. From the fact that it is not in Shakespeare we may infer that it was not in common use before the 17th century. In Phillips it is "vulgarly taken for a fool", in Grose (1785) "a foolish concerted fellow."

The Dutch word is borrowed from Ger. *weissager*, from *weissagen*, to prophesy. This verb is also a product of very early folk-etymology. It is Old High Ger. *wissagōn*, as though from *wīs*, wise, and *sago*, speaker, sayer, but it is really formed from Old High Ger. *wizago*, prophet, which is cognate with Anglo-Sax. *wītega*, wise man, prophet, one who knows: "Thes is sōthlice wītega, the on middangeard <sup>1</sup> cymth" (John vi 14). Thus there is only a distant connection with *weise*, wise, and none with *sagen*, to say.

Ger. *weissager* is in sense equivalent to *wahrsager*, truth-sayer. The corresponding English word is *sooth-sayer*, from Anglo-Sax. *sōth*, true, which survives also in the archaic *forsooth* <sup>2</sup>. Hence also the verb *soothe*, which we now associate with both literal and figurative syrup. Its earlier sense was to calm irritation by acquiescence, to interject the emollient "Yea, forsooth," which preceded the contemporary "Just so," "Quite right," etc. Falstaff describes Master Dombledow the draper as a "whoreson Achitophel, a rascally yea-forsooth knave" (2 Henry IV, i, 2). This is sometimes explained by commentators as characterizing the draper's vulgar phraseology, but there is no evidence

<sup>1</sup> This Common Teutonic name for earth, the middle-dwelling (lit. yard) between heaven and hell, survived as *midden-erd* in Mid. English, and as *middle-erd* up to the 16th century in Scottish.

<sup>2</sup> Now usually ironical, but in Mid. English equivalent to the Biblical "verily."



## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

that either *jeu* or *farce* ever bore the stamp of vulgarity. As a picture of the obsequious tradesman, washing his hands with invisible soap and assenting to all his patron's remarks, it is as effective as Mr. Chubb's impressionist sketch of a waiter: "A damned trencher-scraping, napkin-carrying, shilling-seeking up-an-down-stairs son of a bitch." The association with Achitophel confirms this view, for the latter was pre-eminently one of those who, according to Lyly's Euphues, "soothe young youths in all their sayings, uphold them in all their doings."

### Yeoman

The history of the *yeoman* runs curiously parallel to that of the squire.<sup>1</sup> Each began as a subordinate or attendant and ended as a freeholder, his land being originally held in connection with military services or obligations. In royal or noble households the *yeoman* ranked between the sergeant and the groom (sergeant, yeoman, groom of the buttery, etc.). In the military hierarchy the order was knight, squire, yeoman, an order more or less preserved by the titled landowners, country gentry and yeomen farmers of pre-War days. Chaucer (Prologue, ll. 43-117) has drawn of the three types portraits that will last for all time.

"Yeoman's service" is one of the numerous picturesque phrases first found in Shakespeare, and revived, after two centuries of disuse, by Scott.

I once did hold it, as our statists do,  
A baseness to write fair, and labour'd much  
How to forget that learning, but, sir, now  
It did me yeoman's service.

(Hamlet, v, 2)

It is uncertain whether Shakespeare was using an already current expression, of the same type as "knight's service" (i.e. service connected with the tenure of land), or whether

<sup>1</sup> Old Fr. *escuier* (now *écuyer*, equeyry), Vulgar Lat. *scutarius*, shield-bearer.

## YEOMAN

he coined it in imitation of the latter, in the same way as he made Beatrice coin *trenchman* (*Much Ado*, i, 1) on the analogy of *bowman* and *spearman*

The official sense of *yeoman* long survived in the titles of many royal officials, and, by analogy with "yeoman of the buttery, etc.," we find the hangman's assistant humorously called the "yeoman of the cord." The Navy still has the rank of "yeoman of the signals," but the only royal yeomen are now the "Yeomen of the Guard," a corps raised at the accession of Henry VII (1485), and derisively called, since the 17th century, *beef-eaters* (see p. 5).

*Yeoman* is a fine word. Like other fine words it has almost dropped out of use. It suggests, I think, to most people, the picture of a bluff and stalwart Englishman, a stout friend and an indomitable foe. It was the "mighty bow" which Chaucer puts into the hand of his *yeoman* that won our great battles in the Middle Ages. Later on, the "yeoman of Kent, with his yearly rent (income)" was the social backbone of the country. *Yeomanly* and *yeoman-like* once had the same favourable connotation as *sailorly* and *seaman-like*: "The praise of the yeoman as the best type of Englishman, holding society together, neither cringing to the high nor despising his poorer neighbours, hearty, hospitable, fearless, supplies a constant motif of literature under Tudors and Stuarts" (Trevelyan, *English Social History*). There is, so far as I know, no continental equivalent, for the class hardly existed outside England: "Other nations, Englishmen boasted, had no such middle class, but only an oppressed peasantry and the nobles and men-at-arms who robbed them" (*ibid.*).

The etymology of *yeoman* (Mid. English also *yemen*, *yo-man*) has been much discussed. Minsheu (1617) says, "*Yeoman* seemeth to be one word made by contraction of two Danish <sup>1</sup> words (*yong men*)," mentioning, as he usually does, half a dozen other possibilities. Spelman (1687) also

<sup>1</sup> It is better to substitute Anglo-Sax. *geong mann*.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

suggests Anglo-Sax *geong*, young, "*nuod juvenem significat, iidemque sunt qui in Canuti Legibus de Foresta juniores appellantur, antiquis pueri, Gallis valetti.*" This etymology has been recently revived by the Oxford Dictionary, which points out the correspondence between two variant texts of Langland: "Yonge men to renne<sup>1</sup> and to ride" (*Piers Plowman*, A. iii, 207), and "Youmen to yernen<sup>1</sup> and to ride" (*ibid.*, B. iii, 213). For the contraction it compares south-west dialect *yeomath*, young math (= aftermath, second mowing).

It may be noted also that *yeoman* is commonly glossed by *valetus* in medieval dictionaries, and that *valet*, for which Cotgrave gives *yeoman*, means a "junior" vassal. The *Catholicon Anglicum* (1483) explains *yeoman* by *ephebus*, i.e. Gr. *ἐφηβος*, a young citizen from eighteen to twenty, a military tiro.

It seems not unreasonable to suppose that the Norman *escuier* and the English *yeoman* were almost the same thing, and that the higher position assumed by the former was due to his belonging to the ruling caste. German *junker* (= *jung herr*) offers a parallel to the formation of *yeoman*, while its sense-history is exactly that of *squire*.

### Yon

We are all familiar with *beyond* and *yonder*, but, except for occasional poetic reminiscences, such as "yon little stream hard by," we are hardly conscious of the fact that *yon*, still flourishing in the dialects, has every right to be recognized as a regular demonstrative adjective forming a convenient contrast with *this*. *This* and *yon* properly correspond, in function as in origin, to the German demonstratives *dieser* and *jener*, the latter of which also tends to become disused in Modern German.

The word (Anglo-Sax. *geon*) is common to the Teutonic

<sup>1</sup> Both these words mean "run."

# YON

languages (cf. Dutch *gene*, Goth *jains*), and its derivatives and compounds can also be paralleled, e g , corresponding to our archaic *yonside* we find *jensets* in German and *hunsida* in Swedish. The vitality of this good old word was brought home to me many years ago at a North and South Rugger match. My neighbour, a Yorkshireman, expressed his disapproval of the number of free kicks awarded to the South by the oft-repeated comment, "He's the lousiest referee I've ever seen, is yon "

The corresponding adverb *yond* is obsolete in literary English, except in the works of writers who try to reproduce the dialect of their characters. It is, however, frequent in Shakespeare:

The fringed curtains of thine eye advance  
And say what thou seest yond.

(Tempest, 1, 2 )

Shakespeare also uses both *yon* and *yond* regularly in the same demonstrative sense as our Yorkshire friend.

When a writer attempts to use the language of a bygone age, he should have his proofs read by a philologist. Otherwise he is likely to give himself away. Scott did so frequently, as did also Chatterton. Browning, in Pippa Passes, was guilty of perhaps the most startling verbal "gaffe" ever perpetrated by a writer. The example of deliberate archaism was set by Spenser, who admired and imitated Chaucer. In a Tudor and Stuart Glossary by Skeat and Mayhew, published in 1914, occurs the entry "*yond*: this word occurs in the following passages. . . . It seems to be a synonym of 'fierce.' "

Here are the passages, in full:

Then like a lyon, which hath long time saught  
His robbed whelpes and at the last them fond  
Amongst the shepheard swaynes, then wexeth wood <sup>1</sup> and yond.  
(Faerie Queene, II, viii, 40.)

<sup>1</sup> See p. 3, n. 2.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

Not halfe so fast the wicked Myrrha fled  
From dread of her revenging f.thers hond,  
Nor halfe so fast to save her maydenhed  
Fled fearefull Daphne on th'Ægean strond,  
As Florimell fled from that monster yond,  
To reach the sea ere she of him were raught <sup>1</sup>  
(Ibid, III, vii, 26)

Let none forget Obizo of Tuscan lond,  
Well worthy praise for many a worthy deed,  
Nor those thee brethren, Lombards fierce and yond,  
Achilles, Sforza, and stein Palameed.  
(Fairfax's Tasso, 1, 55)

Fairfax published his translation of Tasso's Jerusalem Delivered in 1600, i e. about ten years after the appearance of the first three books of the Faerie Queene. He evidently copied Spenser, whose *yond*, like his preposterous *derring-do*, is due to a misunderstanding of Chaucer. The Oxford Dictionary points out that the phrase which misled him was probably from the Clerk of Oxford's Tale of Patient Grizel, in which he took the Mid. English adverb *yond* for a postposed adjective. The passage occurs in Chaucer's "envoy" to the story, advising wives to show spirit:

Ye archiwyves stondesth at defense,  
Syn ye be strong as is a greet camaille,  
Ne suffreth nat that men yow doon offense;  
And sklendre wyves, fieble, as in bataille,  
Beth egre as is a tygre yond in Ynde.<sup>2</sup>  
Ay clappeth as a mulle, I yow consaille.  
(Chaucer, E. 1195.)

<sup>1</sup> Reached.

<sup>2</sup> Be fierce as is a tiger yonder in India.

## Chapter II

### ESSAYS IN ETYMOLOGY

#### Akimbo

FOR this curious word, first recorded c. 1400, the Oxford Dictionary proposes no etymology. It mentions, only to reject them, two unlikely guesses that have been made. Webster mentions one of these, viz. Old Norse *keng-boginn*, as a possibility. The earliest record is from the Mid. English Tale of Beryn: "The hoost set his hond in kene-bowe." Later we find *a-kenbow*, and the word occurs, with various spellings, throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, settling down by the 19th to the present form. It is generally used of a bullying, provocative attitude, like French "les poings sur les hanches," which automatically suggests a vituperative fishwife. That it was regarded as a colloquialism or vulgarism may be inferred from the fact that the early lexicographers—Bailey, Johnson, Todd, Richardson—only record it under the word *kimbo*, of which more anon. Grose, in his slang dictionary, entitled a Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue (1785), describes it as "cant," and explains that to "set one's arms *a kimbaw*, vulgarly pronounced *a kimbo*, is to rest one's hands on the hips keeping the elbows square, and sticking out from the body, an insolent, bullying attitude." It occurs frequently, however, in the early Latin-English dictionaries of the 17th century as the only possible rendering of Lat. *ansatus*.

The best way to solve the etymology of a word of this kind is to adopt the comparative method. How do other nations express the attitude? We will start with Lat. *ansatus*, lit. furnished with handles, as in *vas ansatum*, a pitcher with two "ears." *Ansa* is explained by Cooper as the "care or

handle of a cuppe or pot." Plautus, our chief literary authority for colloquial Latin, has <sup>1</sup>(*Persa*, II, v, 7) *ansatus homo*, which Cooper renders "a man with his armes on kenbow." It is evident that this attitude has some suggestion of a vessel with two curved handles. So we find in French, "*les bras courbez en anse*: with armes a-kemboll" (Cotgrave); "*il marche, pliant les bras en forme d'anse*. he walks with his arms on kembow" (Miège, 1679); "*faire le pot à deux anses*: to set one's arms a kembo, to strut" (Boyer, 1702). Mathurin Régnier († 1613) describes a bore as "*ayant, ainsi qu'un pot, les mains sur les roignons*" <sup>2</sup> (*Sat.* viii) Kilian's Dutch-Latin Dictionary (1620) renders *koperen pot*, lit. copper pot, by "*homo ansatus*, i.e. qui incedit utroque brachio in ansarum modum ad latera applicato" Ludwig explains "to set his arms a kembo" as "die arme in die seite setzen, wie ein topf mit zwei henckeln," i.e. like a pot with two handles, and Schwan's German-French Dictionary (1783) gives, as the equivalent of "einen henkel-topf machen," the French "*faire le pot à deux anses*," lit. to make a pot with two handles. Finally, Scoane's Spanish-English Dictionary (1854) has "*andar en jarras*: to set one's arms a-kimbo," a *jarra* being, according to Oudin's Spanish-French Dictionary (1660), "*un pot qui est ventru et rond et à deux anses*," i.e. an amphora

I have not pursued the quest into any more European languages, but I think these examples make it very likely that *kimbo* had originally the meaning of a jug-handle or "pot-ear," Lat. *ansa*. This seems to have been Dryden's interpretation of the word. Where Virgil has—

Et nobis idem Alcamedon duo pocula fecit,  
Et molli circum est ansas amplexus acantho. (Ecl. iii.)

Dryden translates—

And I have two, to match your pair, at home;  
The wood the same, from the same hand they came;  
The kimbo-handles seem with bear's-foot <sup>2</sup> carved.

<sup>1</sup> Lit his hands on his kidneys (*roignons*).

<sup>2</sup> Popular name of acanthus or brankursine.

## ANLACE

It may, I think, be assumed that the second element is *bow*, used in older English of anything bent (*elbow*, *rainbow*, *saddle-bow*, etc.), but the first is uncertain. My own opinion is that it is *can*, a vessel. We now think of a *can* as metallic, but the name was originally applied in English, like its cognates in other languages, to any vessel for holding liquids. In the 1388 version of the Wyclifite Bible the "six water-pots" of the Marriage in Cana are "sixe stonun cannes," and Holyoak explains *amphora* as "a can with two eares." Hence it is obvious that *can-bow* would be a very good equivalent for pot-handle. That such a compound does not happen to be on record is hardly a serious objection. It is not a word likely to get into literature. The further phonetic changes are normal. If the following quotation from Thomas's Latin Dictionary (1644) were only two centuries older, it would be conclusive: "*Ansatus homo* (Plaut.): one that in bragging manner stroweth up and down with his armes a-canne-bow."

## Anlace

Although this name for a medieval dagger has been obsolete since c. 1500, its occurrence in Chaucer's Prologue has made it familiar to modern readers and has led to various theories as to its origin. It is found, as a picturesque revival, in Scott and Byron. Chaucer uses it in his description of the Franklin:

An anlaas (*var* anelas) and a gipser<sup>1</sup> al of silk  
Heeng at his girdel.

(Prologue, l. 357.)

The Oxford Dictionary notes that it occurs several times, Latinized as *anelacius*, in Matthew Paris (13th century), finds "no traces of it in any Continental language," and defines it as "a short two-edged knife or dagger, broad at the hilt and tapering to the point." This definition seems to be due to J. R. Planché, Somerset herald, whose History of British

<sup>1</sup> Pouch, from Fr. *gibecière*, game-bag.



## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

Costume was published in 1834. It is quite possible that antiquaries recognize the *anelace* under this description, but I take leave to doubt whether the medieval knight would have done so

Before discussing this point, or the Oxford Dictionary's statement as to the absence of the word from Continental languages, it is interesting to see what earlier etymologists have to say. In Du Cange, we find, "*anelacius*: cultellus brevior, sica (Matth Paris). Vox Chaucero familiaris. Ab anulo seu anello, quo ea sica vel ejusdem capulus insertus gestabatur, sic dictum suspicatur Carolus de Aquino<sup>1</sup> in Lex. Milit. Germanis *laz* olim latus significabat; hinc *anelacius* Schiltero<sup>2</sup> est telum adlaterale."

The first suggestion is plausible, as a dagger might well be furnished with a suspensory ring, but it is negated by the fact that the ending *-acius*, *-acia* is only used to form augmentatives or "pejoratives." An Old Fr. *anelas*, from *anel* (now *anneau*), could only mean a big ring. Schilter is quite right as to Lat. *latus*, side, having become *laz*, though the "Germani" have of course nothing to do with the word. *Laz* is Old Provençal,<sup>3</sup> and occurs in a passage which is curiously germane to our subject

Sanct Pedre sols vennyar lo vol;

Estrais lo fer que al laz og<sup>4</sup>

(Passion du Christ, 10th century)

But, even supposing that from *al laz* could be formed an unrecorded Provençal noun *anelaz*, which is not possible, we should hardly expect to find a Provençal word current in English as early as Matthew Paris's "genus cultelli quod vulgariter anelacius dicitur."

<sup>1</sup> The Italian Carlo d'Aquino, author of an unfinished *Lexicon Militare* (1724-7).

<sup>2</sup> Johann Schilter, German philologist († 1705).

<sup>3</sup> In Old French it is *lez*, whence the preposition *lès*, beside, near, in such place-names as *Plessis-lès-Tours*.

<sup>4</sup> Saint Peter alone wished to avenge him:

He drew the sword which he had at his side.

## ANLACE

Skinner, in his "Etymologicon vocum omnium antiquarum quae usque a Wilhelmo Victore invaluerunt, et jam ante parentum aetatem in usu esse desierunt" (1671), includes *anelace*, with the remark, "Nescio an sic dictum a capulo annulis instructo" Most word-hunters of the 17th and 18th centuries also record it, but without attempting to solve its etymology.

I fancy that Chaucer himself analysed *anelas* as "on a lace." Of the Shipman he tells us:

A daggere hangynge on a laas had he  
 Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun (Prologue, l 392.)

This etymology is also dubiously suggested by Skeat.

The true explanation is that Mid. Eng *anelas* and Anglo-Lat. *anelacius* are metathetic forms of the quite common Old French word *alenas*, a dagger, of which Du Cange and Godefroy give examples from the 12th century onward. Metathesis of *l-n* is not uncommon, e g It *alenare* and Old Fr *alener*, to breathe, are from Vulgar Lat. *alenare*, for classical *an(h)elare*, to pant. Old Fr *alenas* is an augmentative of Fr. *alène*, awl, just as *coutelas*, cutlass, is an augmentative of Old Fr. *coutel* (now *couteau*), knife In Old French and Mid. English, as in other languages, the names of implements used for puncturing insensitive material were often applied to implements used for puncturing the human skin. We find both *bodkin* and *awl* in the sense of dagger. So also *puncheon* (now usually reduced to *punch*) and its French original *porignon*. Both Barbour and Wyntoun speak of Caesar as stabbed to death with "puncheons," while early English writers generally use "bodkin" in reference to the same tragedy. It. *stiletto*, properly a small stilus or writing implement, is another example.

Fr. *alène* is from Old High Ger. *alansa*, *alesna*, a derivative of *āla* (now Ger. *ahle*), cognate with our *awl*, Old Norse *alr*, Dutch *aal*, and ultimately related to the synonymous Sanskrit *āṇṇ*.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

In Du Cange will be found several other derivatives, e.g. "*cultellus allenatis*: pugiunculus, sica ad instar subulae (i.e. shaped like an awl), nostris olim *alenas*," with an extract from a 14th-century regulation forbidding the carrying of these weapons at Marseilles. Godefroy gives the Old French forms *alenaz*, *alesnaz*, *aleinas*, with examples ranging from the 12th to the 15th century.

This etymology suggests that the *anlace* was not a bladed dagger with a fine point, but a tapering weapon of stiletto form, in fact an elongated awl. The medieval knight, in his metallic sheathing, was as impervious as a lobster. Even when he was completely "knocked out," his final elimination could only be accomplished by the help of a kind of tin-opener, usually called a *miséricorde* or dagger of mercy. I suggest that the *alenas* was an improved *miséricorde*, of a strength and solidity suited to a special purpose. In a passage from Guillaume Guyart (1305) we read of a warrior, who, having laid his enemy low, proceeds to give the final touches:

Un alenas en sa main  
Cherche des armeures l'estre  
Pour lui ocire et afiner.<sup>1</sup>

The Oxford Dictionary also quotes from the Aunturs of Arthur (c. 1420)—

Opon his cheveroune beforn  
Stode as a unicorn  
Als scharpe as a thorn  
An nanlas <sup>2</sup> of stele—

evidently referring to the solid spike protruding from the metal frontlet of a medieval warhorse.

As the use of gunpowder became general, the fighting-man began to shed his panoply piece by piece, and the *anlace*, having outlived its usefulness, ceased to exist as the name of a specialized implement.

<sup>1</sup> With an *anlace* in his hand he seeks the joint of the armour to kill him and finish him off.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *newt* from *an ewt* and *Nash* from Mid. Eng. *atten ash*.

## BLOODY

### Bloody

In Ballantyne's *Coral Island*, one of the characters is a repentant pirate called Bloody Bill. When, at the age of ten, I lent this treasured volume to a school-fellow, it was returned with the peccant adjective carefully obliterated throughout by the blacklead pencil of an austere parent. In those days it would have been necessary to apologize for discussing the etymology of the dreadful word, monopolized, as it then was, by the rougher type of working-man. Even the policeman, giving evidence in court, used to testify delicately that the prisoner had "called him a *b*—<sup>1</sup> liar." There is a story, already ancient, of a toiler, who, left cold by the election poster "One man, one vote," was stirred to enthusiasm on hearing the explanation, "One bloody man, one bloody vote." Mr. Mencken, who serves up this chestnut in his *American Language*, quite ruins the effect by omitting the final *réplique*, "Then why don't it say so?" This reminds me of the masterly explanation of capitalism that I heard some fifty years ago from a large and beery "four-wheeler" exhorting a taciturn and unconvinced "hansom":—"And where d'ye s'pose they got their bloody money from? Why! robbed it out o' the bloody people." Marxism in a nutshell!

Now that *bloody*, printed in full, has become a feature of the vocabulary of the best-seller, whether dramatist, poet or novelist, there can be no objection to discussing its origin. The delusion that it is a corruption of *by'r Lady*<sup>2</sup> seems in-eradicable. It crops up as regularly as the superstition that derives *cabal* from the initials of Charles II's five ministers, and has as little foundation in fact.

<sup>1</sup> This Victorian delicacy is apparently not quite obsolete: "Defending solicitor, 'Did you hear the conductress use the word *b* . . . ?' Witness, 'I don't think she used many other words'" (*Daily Telegraph*, Nov 8, 1945).

<sup>2</sup> An interjection very common in Shakespeare, in no way corresponding in use to *bloody*.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

What we know about *bloody* is that in the oldest examples it is adverbial, corresponding to the *awfully*, *thundering*, *beastly*, of modern slang, and that up to about 1750 it was inoffensive, as, according to Mr. Mencken, it still is in the United States. Swift writes to Stella (May 29, 1714), "It was bloody hot walking to-day", in 1742, the blameless Richardson uses "bloody passionate" in *Pamela*, and at a later date Sir Walter Scott found that sitting for his bust was "bloody cold work." It is very common in English c. 1680 in the phrase "bloody drunk," which leads the Oxford Dictionary to suggest derivation from *blood*, in its Stuart sense of man of rank and fashion (cf "drunk as a lord").

It seems, at any rate, likely that some such association may have coloured its use at the period in question; but, if we compare the use of Fr. *sanglant*, Ger. *blutig*, and Dutch *bloedig*, we see that we merely have to do with an expletive instinctively chosen for its grisly and repellent sound and sense. In Dutch "een bloedige hoon" is a bitter insult, what could be called in French "un sanglant outrage." In Molière's *Précieuses Ridicules* Madelon describes the deception practised on herself and her cousin as "une sanglante pièce." Voltaire, in his *Commentaire sur Corneille*, writes, "La princesse Henriette joua un tour bien sanglant (a bloody trick!) à Corneille, quand elle le fit travailler à Bérénice," and the word is still used with *injure*, *reproche*, *outrage*, etc. If we go still farther back, we find, in a 14th-century report of a marital dispute, that "elle l'appela sanglant sourd et lui l'appela sanglante ordure." In 1270 the "viguier" of Béziers addressed recalcitrant tax-payers in terms which the chronicler renders in Latin as follows: "O rustici sanguinolenti, vos dabit, velitis vel non." It is even recorded that Joan of Arc applied the epithet *sanglant* to her page, when he failed to rouse her in time for a brush with the enemy.

German *blut* is still used as an intensive prefix, e.g. *blutarm* means "miserably poor," and the archaic *blutdiel*

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might be rendered in robust English by "bloody thief." "Das ist mein blutiger ernst" is fairly polite German for "I seriously (Shavian *bloody+well*) mean what I say." So there is no need to build up fantastic theories in order to account for the word with which we are dealing.

The adverbial use, for *bloodily*, is due to an instinct which tends to drop *-ly* from a word already ending in *-y*. The oldest example of this instinct is the word *very*, which is the Old French adjective *verai* (now *vrai*). It is still occasionally an adjective, as in "the very thing," etc., and the adverb *verily* survives in Biblical English. But we should not speak of a "verily nice girl," though, unless we have been in America, we should speak of a "really nice girl" rather than of a "real nice girl." Thus we say "pretty well" not "prettily well," "jolly rich" not "jollily rich." It is obvious that, if the lady in Mr Shaw's *Pygmalion* had used the logically correct "not bloodily likely" instead of the accepted "not bloody likely," her sparkling contribution to the dialogue would have suggested a sobriety test at the police-station. Similarly, Mr. Masfield's beautiful line, "I'll bloody burn his bloody ricks,"<sup>1</sup> would lose all its rhythm and much of its charm, if the correct adverb were substituted before "burn."

The earliest record in the Oxford Dictionary is "bloody drunk," from Etherege's *Man of Mode* (1676). There is an older example in John Marston's *Faun* (1606), in which a character is described as "cruelly eloquent and bluddily learned." Here we have the original adverbial form, while both date and context exclude the "drunk as a lord" theory. The use of *cruelly* in the same line, like our modern *awfully*, *frightfully*, etc., also helps to support my thesis. Of about the same date are the following lines, quoted in the *Times Literary Supplement* (Dec. 20, 1923) from the old play of Sir Thomas More, some parts of which are attributed to Shakespeare:

<sup>1</sup> The Everlasting Mercy.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

O power, what art thou in a *radmans eies*?  
Thou mak'st the plodding idiof bloody wise.

„

### Burgee

The name of this flag, familiar to yachtsmen, is not recorded till 1848 by the Oxford Dictionary, which suggests no etymology. It has the appearance of belonging to the class of *marquee*, *Chunee*, etc., that is, of false singulars due to a word ending in a sibilant being mistaken for a plural. I had long been convinced of its connection with Fr. *bourgeois*, in its old sense of shipmaster, when a communication from Mr. Albert Matthews of Boston (U.S.A.) to Notes and Queries (Jan 25, 1913) supplied the missing link.

Mr. Matthews gave two early quotations. The first, in a letter written (June 1653) from Flushing by Bishop John Bramhall to the Duke of Ormonde, runs, "By ill-luck or ill-messengers or both we have not had one single prize yet come into these parts since I came here. And our Dutch owners begin to be startled because Burgee's caution is required of their captains." This, though relating to nautical matters, has no connection with the modern sense of *burgee*, but it points to a form *burgese*, intermediate between the early Anglo-Norman *burgess* and the modern *bourgeois*. This is a form which we should expect to exist, *-ese* being the regular English equivalent of Old Fr. *-eis* (later *-ois*, *-ais*), e.g. Chinese, Portuguese, etc. *Burgee's caution* is evidently the equivalent of Fr. "*caution bourgeoise*" - citie securitie, or securitie of rich, and resident citizens" (Cotgrave).

The second extract is from the Boston Post-Boy of June 18, 1750: "Thursday last, as Colonel William Rickets of Elizabeth-Town (New Jersey), with his wife and family, were going home from this city in his own boat accompanied by some of his friends, they unfortunately left their burgee flying at their masthead, and on their coming abreast of His Majesty's ship Greyhound, then lying in the North River, a gun was fired from aboard her." Here we

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have the shipowner, flying his private flag, fired on by a king's ship for not "vailing" his colours as etiquette required. Fr. "*bourgeois d'un navire* the owner of a ship" (Cotgrave) is well documented in French nautical language, and I am told that in the modern yachting world the *burgee* is run up when the owner comes on board. Evidently the flag was known at one time as the *burgese*, reduced to *burgee* in the same way as the popular *Chinee* for *Chinese*.

### Buskin

Archaic names of garments have a way of reviving. World War I brought back the "jerkín" a few years after Mr. Burberry had reintroduced the "gabardine"; so it is quite possible that at some future date we may resuscitate the "buskin." At present we only use the word with a vague reminiscence of Robin Hood or the "buskined stage."

*Buskin* appears c. 1500. The Oxford Dictionary suggests foreign origin, and mentions as possibly connected Old Fr. *brousequin*, Dutch *broosken*, Sp. *borcegut*, It. *borzacchino*, etc. I am quite willing to believe that our *buskin* may have been influenced by one or other of these words, none of which appears to have been much used in its native language, but *buskin* has never had an -r-, nor is there any record of transition forms such as one would expect to find. A word may show the influence of a foreign equivalent without being derived from it, e.g. it is quite reasonable to assume that the Scottish *bootkins*, as the name of an instrument of torture, may owe something to the Fr. *brodequins*, lit. "buskins," but also "bootes, filled with hoat oyle, etc. whereinto the legs being put are extreemely tormented" (Cotgrave); yet no one would suggest that *bootkin* is "derived" from *brodequin*.

The earliest Oxford Dictionary record for *buskin* is from the Privy-Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York (1503), in which the word occurs several times, e.g. "To Rutte the Quenes cordener (i.e. cordwainer, shoemaker) for shoyes and buskyns."



## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

I regard *buskin* as a corruption of *buckskin*, from the material employed. *Buckskins* are now breeches, in the 17th century they were gloves (cf. a pair of kids); in the 15th century they were buckskin boots. "My lord paied to his cordwaner for a payr bucskyns xviii" (Howard Household Accounts, 1481-90). A *cordwaner* (cf Fr *cordonnier*, earlier *cordouanier*) originally worked in *cordouan*, i.e. Cordovan, a choice Spanish leather from which were made boots, shoes and "buckskins" for the gentry. The Cordwainers are still one of the City Livery Companies. This leather was tanned from goat-skin, in which connection it may be noted that, up to the 16th century, *buck* meant goat as well as deer.

The natural transition from *buckskin* to *buskin* appears also in the surname Buskin, which, though uncommon, is found in the London Directory and elsewhere. *Buckskin* (or *Peilde-cerf*) is well recorded as a Mid English nickname, probably from some peculiarity of costume, e.g. "Richard de Gravede, called Bokskyn" (City Letter-Books, 14th century). Walter Bukskyn, bailiff to Queen Elcanor, is mentioned several times in the Close Rolls (temp Edward I); in the Fine Rolls he is called Walter Buskyn, an inevitable corruption.<sup>1</sup>

### Caulk

The spelling *caulk*, earlier also *calk*, still the American form, appears to have been fixed by Dr. Johnson. A ship is "caulked" by forcing oakum into the seams and then pouring in melted pitch. The Oxford Dictionary derives the verb from Mid Eng. *cauken*, to trample, from Old Fr. *cauquer*, from Lat *calx*, *calc-*, heel. So also Webster. This makes the process rather acrobatic, though that is not, philologically, a very serious objection, but we "caulk" the ship or the seams, not the oakum. Moreover, we should expect the verb to have some relation to the substance applied, as in the almost

Phonetically it is explained by "dissimilation," the double *-k-* sound being automatically simplified.

## CAULK

synonymous nautical verb to *pay*, which has nothing to do with finance, but represents Old Fr *peier*, from Lat *pix*, *pic-*, pitch. When we use the expression "the devil to pay," we naturally think of the Arch-fiend claiming his due, but Jack Bunce was aware of the true meaning, when he said, "There will be the devil <sup>1</sup> to pay, and no pitch hot" (Scott, *The Pirate*, ch. 36).

Primitive caulking consisted in plastering a wicker coracle with clay. The earliest "caulker" on record is Noah, who "pitched his ark within and without with pitch." In the Vulgate (Genesis, vi. 14), the pitch is called *bitumen* and the verb is *linere*, to daub. Next in chronological order comes the mother of Moses, who "took for him an ark of bulrushes and daubed it with slime and with pitch" (Exodus, ii. 3), *bitumine ac pice* in the Vulgate. Bitumen, or mineral pitch, was regularly applied to this purpose by Elizabethan seamen. Raleigh "caulked" his ships with "stone-pitch" from the pitch lake in Trinidad and "caulking" with lime is described in Hakluyt (x, 202). *Lime* now usually means calcium oxide, but its original sense was anything viscous; cf. Ger. *leim*, glue, and our *bird-lime*.

The oldest example of the verb to *caulk* is "The shippe for to caulke and pyche" (Oxf Dict, c. 1500). It replaced the much earlier verb to *lime*, used, e.g., in reference to the ark, which was "set and limed agen the flood" (c. 1250). So also Caxton, in 1483, "Lyme it with cleye and pitche within and without." Our *caulk* is *calcare* in Med. Latin, and this is a contraction of a Late Lat *calicare*, explained in the great German Thesaurus by *verkitten*, i.e. to plaster with lime. Most European languages use for *caulk* a verb related to Fr. *calfeuter*. This appears to come from the Portuguese, the earliest world navigators. Their verb is *calafetar*, probably a derivative of *cal*, lime, Lat *calx*, *calc-*, whence also Fr *chaux*, lime, and, with changed meaning, Eng. *chalk*.

<sup>1</sup> *Devil* is said to be nautical slang for the seam nearest the water-line.

## Codlin

i'

The etymology of this name for a kind of apple is indicated by Bardsley, in his Dictionary of English and Welsh Surnames (1901), but his article seems to have escaped the notice of etymologists. It was originally *cœur-de-lion*, a nickname given to the fruit, either from its hardness or from its being regarded as sound at the core. The etymology seems to be proved by the parallel history of the surname Codlin, Codling.

If we take this first, we find that *Cœur-de-lion* was a fairly common surname in the 13th and 14th centuries. I find Ralph Quer de Lyun in the Fine Rolls (temp. Henry III), Robert Querdelioun in the Close Rolls for 1329, and William Querdelioun living in London c. 1350 (City Letter-Books). By the middle of the 15th century the form assumed was Querding. In 1433 John Querding occupied a magisterial position in Norwich (Bardsley). Though the name has usually become Codlin, it is still found in Norfolk as Quadling, Quodling. It has always been especially a Norfolk name.

Turning to the apple, we find that the oldest form (15th century) was *querdelynge* or *querdling*. Thus, in the earliest-known Latin-English Dictionary, the Promptorium Parvulorum, compiled in Norfolk in 1440 by a Norfolk man, we find *querdlyng appul*, explained by *duracenum*, a Med. Latin word from Lat. *duracinus*, hard (of fruit). Thus *Querding* the name and *querdling* the fruit are recorded within a few years of each other and in the same region. In the 16th century the fruit is still, like the surname, *quodling*, and, although Shakespeare (Twelfth Night, i, 5) has *codling*, Bacon spells it *quadlin* in 1625.

After that *codlin(g)* prevails, a spelling partly due to association with *coddle*, to cook. Palsgrave defines the fruit as *pomme cuite*, Skinner (1671) as *pomum coctile*. The tradition is carried on by the dictionary-makers down to

## COZEN

Johnson, who describes a *codlin* as "an apple generally coddled."

If we consider that the forms of the Norfolk surname and the Norfolk apple run parallel back to the middle of the 15th century, we may, I think, assume as a reasonable proposition that, if we had a 14th-century record for the apple, we should find it called a *quer de lion*, and that it was nicknamed from its hard heart, or perhaps from its excellence.

P.S.—An article which I contributed to the Modern Language Review on this word brought me a communication from an American scholar, Professor Raymond Weekes, who found the proposed etymology "convincing." He called my attention to a passage in the Old French *Chronique des Ducs de Normandie*, describing a mysterious apple-tree discovered in a forest by Richard the Fearless, the fruit of which was afterwards known as "pommes du duc Richard." It does not seem impossible that the English name of the apple may be vaguely connected with the Lionheart's ancestor and namesake.

This origin of the word is accepted by Webster.

## Cozen

This archaic verb is dubiously associated by the Oxford Dictionary with Fr. *cousiner*, "to act as cousin or kinsman, to sponge upon, beguile," an etymology which dates from Minshew. It rejects, as unsupported by sufficient evidence, the alternative derivation from It. "*cozzonare*: to play the horse-breaker or courser . . . also to play the craftie knave" (Florio), from "*cozzone*: a horse-breaker, a horse-courser, also a craftie knave" (ibid.). So also Webster. The *cousiner* etymology is open to serious objections. To begin with, *cousiner* is intransitive (*cousiner avec quelqu'un*), while *cozen* is transitive. Cotgrave has "*cousiner*: to clayme kindred for advantage, or particular ends; as he who, to save charges in travelling, goes from house to house, as cousin to the owner of everie one." He does not appear to

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connect it with *cozen*, whereas Terriano has "*cozzonare*, to have perfect skill in all coosenages" Moreover, the great French dictionaries which register *cousiner*, with an explanation like Cotgrave's, are unable to quote any literary authority for it, and Furetière (1727) remarks that "*ce terme de familiarité n'est point en usage à la cour.*" It is, in fact, a very rare word, and in more than sixty years of omnivorous reading in French literature, from the 9th century up to the present day, I have never met with it

The Elizabethans were fond of punning on *cozen* and *cousin*, evidently regarding them as quite separate words.

Cousins indeed, and by their uncle cozen'd  
Of comfort, kingdom, kindred, freedom, life

(Richard III, iv, 4)

In *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (iv, 5) there is a lot of word-play on "cousins-german" and "German cozeners." Finally, the spelling *cozon* appears in the earliest quotations, e.g., in the spelling of the First Folio, Dr. Caius says, "By gar I am cozoned; I ha married oon garsoon, a boy" (*Merry Wives*, v, 5).

The Oxford Dictionary first finds *cozen* in 1573. It does not seem to occur in Cooper's Latin-English Dictionary of that date, so was no doubt new in English, but in the later 17th-century Latin dictionaries (Holyoak, Gouldman, Littleton, etc.) *cozener*, variously spelt, occurs regularly among the glosses to such words as *impostor*, *praestigator*. *Cozen* had evidently become what Fowler calls a "vogue-word" and it is reasonable to conjecture that it was introduced by English travellers who had had dealings with an Italian *cozzone*. The Italians were then, as now, the most accomplished riders in Europe, and every young noble who did the "grand tour" spent some time at Naples, "where he may improve his knowledge in horsemanship" (Howell, *Instructions for Forreine Travell*, 1642). Horse-copers have always had, rightly or wrongly, a reputation for crooked dealing. Dekker, who, like the other Elizabethan

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experts on the "underworld," constantly uses the word *cozen*, has left us the following portrait of the contemporary horse-coper "So then, a horse-courser to the merchant is as the cheater to the fair gamester he is indeed a meere jadish Nonpolitane [a play in Neapolitan] and deals for none but tyred, tainted, dull and diseased horses. By which meanes, if his picture bee drawne to the life, you shall finde every horse-courser for the most part to be in quality a coozener, by profession a knave, by his cunning a varlet, in fayres a hagling chapman, in the citty a cogging dissembler, and in Smithfield a common forsworne villaine" (Lanthorne and Candle light).

An exact parallel to this history of *cozen* is that of the verb to *jockey*, i.e. to swindle, from the noun *jockey*,<sup>1</sup> which now means only a professional rider, but was applied earlier to a horse-dealer. Dr. Johnson defines a *jockey* as "a cheat, a trickish fellow"

## Crosspatch

A compound sometimes preserves a simple word no longer in use. The Biblical and Shakespearean *blain*, a sore, does not survive in standard English, except in *chulblain*. *Roar*,<sup>2</sup> disturbance, once a common word, has given way to *uproar*. Other examples are the *mail* of *black-mail* (p. 9) and the *mare* of *nightmare* (p. 70). In *crosspatch* we have a survival of the obsolete *patch*, dolt, booby, etc. The compound is first recorded in the Dictionary of the Canting Crew (c. 1700), which has "*crosspatch* a peevish person." Like some other words now usually applied to females (harlot, hoyden, termagant, tomboy), *patch* and *crosspatch* were originally masculine or of common gender. *Patch* occurs eight times in Shakespeare, always applied to a

<sup>1</sup> A Scottish and north English form of Jacky. For similar examples of the use of proper names see my Words and Names, ch. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Quite unconnected with the "roar" of the lion. See p. 105.

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male, and Scott still uses *crosspatch* as a masculine in *The Heart of Midlothian*.

In Shakespeare *patch* is sometimes only a vague term of contempt, as when, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (iii, 2), Puck describes Bottom and his friends as "a crew of patches, rude mechanicals," but elsewhere, as in the *Tempest* (iii, 2), when Caliban calls Trinculo "pied nunny" and "scurvy patch," the word is supposed to have the specific meaning of jester, from his parti-coloured clothes.

The 16th century explained *patch*, fool, from Wolsey's jester *Patch*, whose real name was Sexten. It is more likely that the jester was called *Patch* because he was a fool, than that every fool became a *patch* because of the jester. Moreover, an earlier fool than Wolsey's bore the same sobriquet (v i) The name may have been vaguely influenced by motley dress, but was probably, in the first place, simply a contemptuous application of the common noun *patch*. Spenser, in the character of a country lad, called himself Colin Clout The oldest meaning of *clout*, already in Anglo-Saxon, is *patch*, and Spenser explains the pseudonym as chosen for its "baseness" Ger. *lump*, rogue, identical with *lumpen*, shred, rag, is another parallel.

From *patch* Spenser formed a word *patch-cock* or *patchcock*, the solitary occurrence of which has greatly busied the commentators. He applies it to those English dwellers in Ireland who, having "gone native," became "as very patchcocks [var patchcockes] as the wild Irishe." It is usually taken to mean ragamuffin, tatterdemalion. This is probably the source of the much-discussed Shakespearean *pajock*, occurring in those lines which, as Horatio not unreasonably protested, Hamlet "might have rhymed":

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,  
This realm dismantled was  
Of Jove himself: and now reigns here  
A very, very pajock.

(Hamlet, iii, 2.)

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*Pajock* is apparently here equivalent to the "king of shreds and patches," which is Hamlet's further description (iii, 4) of his uncle.

I venture to insert here an etymological note on *patch*, for which the Oxford Dictionary gives no indication, while other dictionaries print absurdities. It is simply a less dignified variant of *piece*, with which it can be used indifferently in practically every sense, while every existing meaning of *patch* can be rendered in modern French by *pièce*. The use of *patch* for a person is paralleled in the history of *piece*, applied both to men and women as early as the 13th century. The rustic matron still describes a pert damsel as a "saucy, forward piece."

The first record of *patch* is in Wyclif "No man seweth a pacche [Tyndale, *pece*] of rude clothe to an old clothe" (Mark ii. 21). One could quote endless evidence to show the exact correspondence in sense of the two words, which in the medieval and later Latin dictionaries are used synonymously and indifferently. Even the figurative use of to "patch up" (a quarrel) is paralleled by a 17th-century quotation in the Oxford Dictionary. "All being now *piec't* up between them."

The difference in form can be explained. Our spelling of *piece* is artificial, the -i- of the French word completely disappearing from pronunciation. The Mid. English spelling was *pece*. Fr. *pièce* had a dialect variant *pieche*, which similarly became *peche* in Mid. English: "A lute clut mei lodlichen swuthe a muchel ihol peche"<sup>1</sup> (Ancren Riwe, p. 256, Camden ed.), and, some time before the days of Wolsey's fool, Henry VII had a jester of the same name with an earlier spelling. In the Privy Purse Expenses for 1492 occurs the item "To Peche the folc in rewardc, 6s. 8d." But the form *pacche* or *patch* was the normal result of the Old French word, just as Fr. *mèche* became Eng. *match*, and *crèche*, manger, gave *cratch*, still common in dialect and used

<sup>1</sup> A little clout may quickly spoil a large piece.



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by Wyclif in the Gospel narrative of the birth of Christ:

"Sche chuldide her firste born sone and wlapide him in clothis and putide him in a cracche" (Luke, ii 7).<sup>1</sup>

### Cuff

In the sense of a clout of the head, this word is recorded from the early 16th century. The Oxford Dictionary mentions as possibly related the German rogues' slang *kuffen*,<sup>1</sup> to thrash, and the Swedish *kuffa*, to thrust, push. But to *cuff* is neither to thrash nor to push. It has only the very limited sense of a blow, usually with the open hand, in the region of the head. If the hand is clenched, we have the expressive *fisticuff*. When Petruchio says to Katherine, "I swear I'll cuff you, if you strike again" (Taming of the Shrew, ii, 1), we can hardly imagine that he was contemplating a knuckle encounter with the lady. Similarly, when Queen Elizabeth, according to Camden, gave Essex a "cuffe on the ear," we may be sure that the flat of the hand was employed, for no infuriated woman, not even the great Elizabeth, ever succeeded in clenching her fist.

But the original sense may have been to punch, pommel. Palsgrave has, "I cuffe one, I pomell hym about the heed: *je torche*." The figurative use of Fr. *torcher*, lit. to wipe, suggests that *cuff* is one of the numerous semi-euphemistic terms for a blow, such as our elegant "wipe across the chops." We may compare Fr. *frotter*, to rub, but also "to cudgell, thwack, baste, or knock soundly" (Cotgrave), and Katherine's picturesque allusion to "combing the noddle" of a husband with a three-legged stool (Taming of the Shrew, i, 1).

There is a French verb which has exactly the sense required, viz. *coiffer*, to provide with head-gear, to dress the hair. This is often used in Old French of buffeting. Godefroy quotes from an Old French manuscript, "Je vos pin-

<sup>1</sup> This word, first recorded as the noun *kuffe*, a blow, in *Simplicissimus* (1669), may be from Flemish (v.i.).

## DAPPLE-GREY

gnerai, je vos donrei une coife," i.e. "I will comb your hair, I will give you a cuff."<sup>1</sup> Cf. the synonymous *clout*, used in Hamlet of a kerchief or head-band (see quotation, p. 168). The French word passed into Flemish, in which *koffe* is recorded both for head-dress and buffet.

The change of vowel in English is difficult to explain. The word may have been illogically assimilated to the older *cuff*, part of the sleeve, or it may—which is likelier—have been affected by the synonymous, and also older, *buff*, now replaced by *buffet*, but surviving in the compound *rebuff*. The two words would naturally be coupled, as *buffe* and *coiffe* were in Old French, e.g. in the following 14th-century passage: "Les assistans dirent que le dit Jehan gaignoit bien à avoir deux buffes ou coiffes," i.e. "The bystanders stated that the said John was all the better for a couple of 'buffs' or 'cuffs'."

### Dapple-grey

Most dictionaries which include "etymologies" explain *dapple* as derived from Old Norse *depull*, a spot, dot, lit. a little pool. This theory was originated by Wedgwood, who began the publication of his Etymological Dictionary in 1857. It is accepted by Skeat, with the remark, "As Mr. Wedgwood well observes, the resemblance of *dapple-grey* to Icel. *apalgrar*, Fr. *gris pommelé*, is accidental." From Skeat this has been copied by uncritical lexicographers and is even put forward dubiously by the Oxford Dictionary.

The erudition and power of weighing evidence which are supposed to belong to the etymologist are greatly helped by a little common-sense. When we note that the equivalent of *dapple-grey* in most of the European languages is, or was at some time, a compound meaning "apple-grey,"<sup>1</sup> it is difficult to resist the conviction that this was the original form, and that it became *dapple-grey* just as *affodil* (Fr. *asphodèle*) has become *daffodil*.

<sup>1</sup> Recorded, but at a later date than *dapple-grey*.

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The first record of *dapple-grey* is in Sir Thopas.

His steede was al dappull-gray,  
It gooth an ambil in the way

(Chaucer, B 2074)

In the Prologue we are told that—

This reve sat upon a ful good stot (nag),  
That was al pomely grey and highte Scot.

(A. 615)

It was at Boughton-under-Blean that the pilgrims were overtaken by the Canon's Yeoman, whose hackney "was al pomely grys" (G. 559). This French term (now *gris pommelé*) is more frequent than the English in the Middle Ages. *Pommelé*, dappled, is well recorded in Old French, and is applied to other animals besides horses.

The resemblance between the markings of the *dapple-grey* horse and those of the "apple" has, as stated above, been noticed in most languages, e.g. Dan. *abildgraa*, Ger. "*apfelgrau*: apple-grey, dapple-gray" (Ludwig), Dutch "*appelgrauw* vulgo pomaceus, pomulatus" (Kilian, 1620), It. "*pomellato*: spotted, bespeckled, pide, dappel graie" (Florio), and Russ. *jablochnyj* (from *jabloko*, apple). Some etymologists explain this widespread description from the fact that the markings suggest little round apples. The colour which I call *dapple-grey* suggests to me, and did long before I became a humble explorer in etymology, the splashes of deeper colour on the skin of a ripe pippin. The "apple" etymology is accepted by Webster.

The *dapple* and *dappled* beloved of poets, e.g. Milton's "dappled dawn" and "dappled shade," are evolved from the earlier *dapple-grey*, just as the verb to *beetle*, to overhang, is evolved from *beetle-browed*. Similarly Fr. *pommelé* is still used of that "dapple-grey" appearance in the sky which is now associated by us with the mackerel; cf. the French proverb, "Ciel pommelé et femme fardée ne sont pas de longue durée."

## DEMURE

### Demure

Some years ago I gave the Nottingham Three Arts Club a lecture dealing with the curious changes that have come about in the meanings of so many of our familiar adjectives.<sup>1</sup> A good example is *nice*, which the Oxford Dictionary treats under fifteen meanings or groups of meanings, the interpretation of many early examples depending very much on the context. Unlike *nice*, which has gradually gone up in the world, the majority of adjectives descend, via their ironic use, from the complimentary to the depreciatory. *Sanctimonious* is now the natural epithet for a humbug, but Prospero cautions Ferdinand to restrain his amorous ardour till—

All sanctimonious ceremonies may  
With full and holy rite be minister'd.

(Tempest, iv, 1.)

Distrust of conspicuous virtue has given a new sense to *parsimonious*, formerly the natural description of a good housewife, and contempt for wisdom adequately expressed has ruined the once complimentary *sententious*. The *sententious* man is now often regarded as *pompous*, another victim of the same instinct. *Egregious*, i.e. of outstanding excellence, has gone the same way, and *notorious*, famous, tends to do the same. *Obsequious* once meant no more than dutifully obedient, and *officious* is defined by Phillips as "ready to do good offices, serviceable, friendly, very courteous and obliging." An "essay on man" is contained in the sense-development of the word *suggestive*, which, according to a small American dictionary I possess, means "designed or tending to arouse improper thoughts; offensive to modesty and delicacy."

Equally strong is our national distrust of knowledge, exemplified by the degeneration in sense of *artful*, *crafty*, *cunning*, *knowing* and *sly*. Wyclif uses the last word to render

<sup>1</sup> Printed as Chapter I of my *Adjectives—and other Words* (Murray, 1930).

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

the *prudens* of the Vulgate "Therfor be ye sligh as serpentis and symple as dowves" (Matthew, x '16) *Silly*, which once corresponded to the Lat *beatus*, as its German cognate *selig* still does, keeps some of its original sense in "Silly (happy) Suffolk "

*Demure* has suffered from the tendency illustrated above. In 1612 Holyoak equates it with *sober*, and renders it by *verecundus, modestus*. For Milton it was still a complimentary epithet:

Come, pensive nun, devout and pure,  
Sober, stedfast and demure

(Penseroso, l. 31.)

It is found already in Mid. English with the meaning "calm, still," used of the sea Towards the end of the 17th century it had begun to acquire a suggestion of the sly or sanctimonious.

Both the Oxford Dictionary and Webster derive it from Mid. Eng *mure*, ripe (Fr *mûr*) with the comment that the *de-* is "obscure," which it certainly is *Demure* has never had anything to do with maturity and it would be hard to quote another example of a meaningless prefix being attached to an adjective. Moreover, *demure* is, so far as records go, an older word than *mure* When we consider that its essential meaning is "staid," for earlier "stayed," and its equivalents in other languages, e g Lat. *sedatus*, Fr *rassis*, by which it is rendered by Palsgrave, and Ger *gesetzt*, it seems obvious that it is a verbal adjective formed from Norman Fr. *demurer* (*demeurer*), to stay. This verb also gave our *demur*, originally to tarry, abide, whence the nautical *demurrage*, delay in harbour of a ship.

A parallel to this formation is *stale*, which, in all its senses, represents Old Fr. *estale*, from *estaler* (*étaler*), to spread, display, on a "stall" Cf. also *étanche*, formerly *estanche* (whence Eng. *staunch*), from *estancher* (*étancher*), to check a flow. Apart from these examples we have several words in which a French past participle in *-é* appears to

## DESCRY

have lost its final syllable in English. Familiar examples are the legal *treasure treve* (Old Fr. *trouvé*), and *malice prepense*, which we partly translate as "malice aforethought." Others are *costive*, Old Fr. *costivé*, Lat. *constipatus*, the noun *defile*, Fr. *défilé*, and the adjective *signal*, Fr. *signalé*. It is even possible that the verbal adjective *demeure* existed in Old French, for Palsgrave has the adverb "*demeurement*, sadly, wysly," in connection with which it may be noted that *sad* originally meant "staid," e.g. young John Paston writes of his betrothed, "I wys she is no thyng so sadde as I wold she wer."

## Descry

Modern writers on the occult sometimes call a crystal-gazer a *scryer*, a name disinterred by psychical researchers from the works of the 16th-century charlatans, where it had slept undisturbed for two centuries. One of the craft, Edward Kelly, "skryer" to the amazing Dr. Dee, has obtained a niche in the Dictionary of National Biography and the honour of a mention by Butler (*Hudibras*, II, iii, 235). There is no difficulty about the origin of the word. It is from *descry*, Old Fr. *descrier*, equivalent to *escrier* (now only in the reflexive *s'écrier*). English often drops the initial syllable of such words, e.g. *squire* for *esquire*, *stain* for *distain*, although the longer forms often persist as well.

That *ascry*, *escry*, *descry* are old words in our language is shown by the retention of the -s- sound, which, though sometimes preserved in spelling, became silent before another consonant in 13th-century French. Thus Old Fr. *descrier* has a later form *décrier*, which we have adopted as *decry*. Misled by the *de-*, we have gradually given to *decry* the sense of crying down, but its proper French meaning was to shout out, proclaim, and it was especially used in proclaiming the withdrawal of coin from circulation. It is easy to see how a word used in this connection would acquire the sense of disparaging, depreciating. This is shown by Cotgrave, who

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

has, "*On le descrie comme la vieille monnoye*: he hath a verie bad report among the people, his credit 's wholly crack't, fame blemished, reputation lost."

Of the older forms, which, along with other meanings, retained always the original idea of crying out, proclaiming, we have kept only *descry*,<sup>1</sup> giving to it the meaning of discerning, detecting, "spotting."

To see how this arises naturally from the primitive, we have only to turn to the history of *explorare*. Lat. *explorare* meant to spy out, reconnoitre; the *explorator* was not what we understand by an explorer, but an "espie or privie searcher" (Cooper). In the Vulgate we read, "Misit igitur Josue filius Nun de Setim duos viros exploratores in abscondito" (Joshua, i. 2).

*Explorare* is a compound of *plorare*, to weep. We now think of weeping as a rather subdued expression of grief, but the Anglo-Sax *wēpan* is derived from *wōþ*, a sound imitative of loud outcry. The same is true of "crying," which modern restraint can effect noiselessly. The primitive sense of Lat. *plorare* was to bawl lustily,<sup>2</sup> and *explorare* meant "to bewayle with exclamation" (Cooper). The *explorator* announced by a shout the presence of the game or of the enemy. Festus, a 2nd-century Roman word-hunter, tells us, "Speculator ab exploratore hoc differt, quod speculator hostilia silentio perspicit, explorator pacata clamore cognoscit." The *speculator*, in fact, conducted himself like a pointer, the *explorator* like a fox-terrier.

The interesting semantic point is that the people who coined the Old Fr. *descrier*, *escrier*, to cry out, probably unacquainted with the Lat. *explorare* and certainly ignorant

<sup>1</sup> The prefix *des-* or *dis-* was preferred in Mid. English, e.g. we have kept *dishvelled* (Old Fr. *deschevelé*) and rejected the *eschevelé* (now *échevelé*) which French has preserved.

<sup>2</sup> This was the original meaning of its French descendant *pleurer*, while *pleur*, now a poetic equivalent for *larme*, a tear, preserved the sense of wailing, lamentation, up to the 17th century. "Jeter des larmes sans pleur" is Old French for to shed tears without boo-hooing.

## FELON

of its etymology, unconsciously reproduced after a thousand years the same mental process, by creating a verb, which, from the primitive sense of announcing by a shout, evolved that of detecting visually.

Shakespeare uses *descry* in the military sense more than once. Cf. also Milton:

Others from the dawning hills  
Looked out, and scouts each coast light-armed scour,  
Each quarter, to descry the distant foe,  
Where lodged, or whither fled, or if for fight,  
In motion or in halt

(Paradise Lost, vi, 529)

In Anglo-French the form *escrier* is more usual. In 1327, when the young king Edward III was encamped near Durham, Sir James Douglas nearly succeeded in kidnapping him, but the watchmen of the host spotted him: "Mes le dit James Douglas fut escryé des gueites en l'ost et se mist a le fuite" (French Chronicle of London, c. 1350).

## Felon

This word, meaning a sore or swelling in the finger, and especially what is called a "whitlow," is in general use both in English dialect and in the United States. It occurs several times in Thomas Hardy's Wessex novels, e.g. "I've been visiting to Bath, because I had a felon on my thumb" (Far from the Madding Crowd, ch. 33). Both the Shorter Oxford Dictionary and Webster indicate possible identity with the more familiar *felon*, a criminal, wretch, earlier also an adjective, "cruel," which is of unknown origin, but they do not go into details. That this identity is pretty certain seems clear from a comparison with the equivalent words used in other languages. Many years ago I dealt with this word in a paper read to the Philological Society, of which the following is a summary. It is recorded in English in 1340, and still earlier, in "leech-Latin," in 1116. It is found in Old French with the meaning "abscès, tumeur," and is still current in the French spoken



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in Guernsey and Canada. Early examples in the Oxford Dictionary are "wykked felone" (c. 1450) and "felons or noughtie sores" (1578).

The parallels are quite conclusive, e.g. Lat. "*furunculus*: a little theefe, a sore in the bodie called a fellon or catted heare" (Cooper), whence Fr. *furuncle*, earlier also "*furuncule*: a felon or whitlow" (Cotgrave), and "*froncle*. the hot and hard bumpe, or swelling, tearmed a fellon" (ibid.). Another Latin word, *tagax*, thievish, is used by Lucilius for "a felon on a mans finger" (Cooper). In Spanish the word for a stepfather, *padrastra*, also means a whitlow, and in Yorkshire dialect such a swelling is called a "stepmother's blessing." An Old French name for it was *envie*, with which compare the synonymous Dutch *nijd-nagel*, envy nail. I cannot explain the curious name "cat's hair," often used by the earlier dictionaries. Perhaps it is merely a translation of Fr. *poil de chat*, by which Palsgrave explains "whitlow," but this seems equally inexplicable.

### Foil

A maxim of the great German philologist, Jakob Grimm, was "von den wortern zu den sachen," i.e. "from the words to the things." No etymology is of any value which does not agree with the oldest ascertained meaning of the word in question. Ignorance of what a primitive *foil* looked like is responsible for the really idiotic suggestion that the fencing-*foil* owes its name to Fr. *feuille*, leaf, which is presumed to have been applied to the button on the point, a somewhat similar origin being claimed for Fr. *fleuret*, earlier *floret*, a foil.

The earliest *foils* were not buttoned, for the simple reason that the point was not used in early fencing. It is obvious that only a lunatic would have delivered thrusts at polished breastplates. It was not until gunpowder brought about the disuse of heavy armour that any swordsman thought of using the point. The earliest swordplay was hacking with

## GALLIPOT

sword and buckler, later with sword and dagger. Not until the beginning of the 18th century was the blade discarded for the point in fencing.

The original *foil* was a rough, blunt sword-blade, with no resemblance to the implement described by the Oxford Dictionary as "a flexible steel four-faced tapering weapon, buttoned at the point," a picture of which will be found in Webster. The earliest English record of the word is from Thomas Nashe's picaresque novel, *The Unfortunate Traveller, or the Life of Jack Wilton* (1594), in which a down-at-heel gallant "had a piece of a rusty sworde by his side; it was but a foyle neither." We find Old Fr. *floret* similarly used, and it seems to have been a general term for an unpolished sword-blade. Cotgrave has "*floret*: a foile; a sword with the *edge* rebated," and also "*feuille d'un [sic] espee*: the blade of a sword." That *feuille* should be used in this way is quite natural, cf. the correspondence of Eng. *blade* with Ger. *blatt*, leaf, and *schulterblatt*, shoulder-blade; also Lat. *lamina*, metal plate, whence Fr. *lame*, both meaning sword-blade. Fr. *feuille* is still used for the blade of a saw. Thus our *foil* comes, as in "tin-foil," "counter-foil," from Fr. *feuille*, leaf, but it has no connection with what did not adorn a non-existent point!

Kilian's Dutch Dictionary, among the list of foreign words, records *folie*, borrowed from Old French, with the three meanings of leaf, metal plate, broad-sword, which seems pretty conclusive.

## Gallipot

"The wavering apprentice has been confirmed in his desire to quit the gallipots." In these words the Blackwood reviewer delicately alludes to the fact that Keats was an apothecary's apprentice. Grose, in his *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1785), gives "*gallipot*: a nickname for an apothecary." The earliest *gallipots* were used to contain ointments and other medicaments. Johnson's definition,

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"a pot painted and glazed, commonly used for medicines," is accompanied by a stupefying derivation from Sp. *gala*, finery, because a *gallipot* is a "fine, painted pot."

The accepted 17th-century etymology was from the synonymous Dutch *gleipot*. This first appears in Minshew, who lifted it verbatim from the Dutch lexicographer Kilian. *Glei*, earlier also *gleye*, was supposed to mean potter's clay. It also occurs in the compounds "*gleye-backer*: plastes, figulus" (Kilian) and "*gleyers-werck*: vasa scintillantia, e scintillante sive splendente terra; vas fictile Balearicum, Maioricanum" (ibid). The last two words really let the cat out of the bag.

Dutch *glei*, potter's earth, is a ghost-word, or rather an illegitimate inference from *gleipot*, the latter being of much more recent date than our *gallipot*, which is found in the 15th century. *Glei* was perhaps felt to be a variant of the true Dutch word *klei*, cognate with our *clay*. It is really a common 17th-century contraction of *galei*, earlier *galeye*, a galley, just as the South African *vlei* or *vley*, a depression in the land, is contracted from Dutch *valei*, a valley, from Fr. *vallée*.

"Galley" was once almost a general name for vessels from the Mediterranean. Gallies that came up the Thames were moored at Galley Quay, near the Tower: "In this lane (Minchin Lane) of old dwelt divers strangers born of Genoa and those parts; they were commonly called 'galley-men,' as men that came up in the 'galleys' brought up wines and other merchandises, which they landed in Thames street, at a place called 'Galley key'; they had a certain coin of silver amongst themselves, which were halfpence of Genoa, and were called 'galley halfpence'; these halfpence were forbidden in the 13th of Henry IV" (Stow, Survey of London). There is also record of "galley dishes" and "galley tiles," the latter still in Johnson.

This fine porcelain was brought by "galleys" from the Mediterranean, and it is probable that most of it was

## HAPHAZARD

*majolica*<sup>1</sup> from the Balearic Isles. The finest porcelain is called in Dutch *kraanporselein*, because brought in "car-racks." Galleys and carracks are often coupled in early nautical documents, and probably they were very much the same thing for the landsman.

### Haphazard

The Oxford Dictionary explains this compound, recorded from Tudor times, as a collocation of the archaic *hap*, chance, luck (whence *happen*, *happy* <sup>2</sup>), and the synonymous *hazard*, thus lit "hazard of chance." This is an etymology readily accepted without examination, but, when tested, it becomes improbable or impossible. Why should two familiar and synonymous words be put together in this unusual way? We have such compounds as *pea-jacket*, in which an explanatory word has been added to the obsolete *pee*, a jacket, or *shrew-mouse*, coined when the zoological sense of the simple *shrew* was somewhat obscured by its figurative application. But these formations belong to quite a different category. I know of no parallel to the meaningless duplication of an abstract term.

The earliest record for *haphazard* is its use as the name of a character in an old play, *Appius and Virginia* (1575). It seems to belong to that interesting class of nicknames, compounded of a verb and its object, to which we owe about two hundred existing surnames,<sup>3</sup> among them the most famous of English names, Shakespeare. Such names can be counted by thousands in the Middle Ages, and, if *Haphazard* was thus used in a 16th-century play, no doubt it was already some centuries old.

<sup>1</sup> *Majolica* is derived from Majorca, now Mallorca in Spanish.

<sup>2</sup> The older sense of luck, chance, survives in *haply*, *happily*, *happy thought*, etc. Pepys says, "Prince Rupert, I hear, is to go this day to command this fleet going to Guinea against the Dutch. I doubt few will be pleased with his going, being accounted an unhappy man" (Aug. 31, 1664).

<sup>3</sup> See my *Surnames*, ch. 12.

There is an obsolete verb *hap*, to grab, from Fr. "*happer*: to hap, or catch; to snatch or graspe:at" (Cotgrave). It is possible that it survives in the name *Hapgood*, which would then be a little stronger than *Gathergood*,<sup>1</sup> while both contrast with *Scattergood*.

Fr. *happer* belongs to the group of *gripper*, *pincer*, etc., from which are formed many colloquial compounds descriptive of character, such as "*happe-lopín*: a catch-bit, sycophant, smell-feast" (Cotgrave); "*grippeminaud* a griping, catching, greedie, covetous, cruell fellow" (ibid.); "*pince-maille*: a pinch-penie, scrapegood, niggard, miser, penie-father" (ibid.). With these we may compare such 13th-century English nicknames as Cachemaille (Old Fr. *maille* was a small coin), Cachepeny, Gripchese, Pinchepeny. I have no doubt that *hap-hazard* originally meant "grab-chance." To "hap the hazard" would be exactly equivalent to Lat. *occasionem capere* and Fr. *attraper la chance*.

The phrase "at haphazard" came into existence in the same way as its German equivalent "auf's geratewol," lit. at chance-well, from the verb *geraten*, to chance, succeed. This has given the German surname Geratwol, Grothwohl, etc. Its formation from verb and adverb is paralleled in English by such names as Golightly, Rideout, Saywell, Walklate.

## High-flown

It is inevitable that *high-flown* should be associated with "high-flying." The Oxford Dictionary even defines it as "soaring high, elevated, elated," and derives it from *flown*, the past participle of *fly*. This view, which classes *high-flown* with such illogical adjectives as "outspoken" (for "outspeaking"), is, in my opinion, quite erroneous. The original meaning of *high-flown* was not elevated, hyperbolic, but turgid, bombastic, or what is called by the mysterious American name "high-falutin'."

<sup>1</sup> In these names *good* means goods, wealth.

## HIGH-FLOWN

The two ideas are akin, but not identical. When, during the progress of a "labour" dispute, a lady Member of Parliament calls the Cabinet ministers a set of "brass-faced baby-killers," and a gentleman Member of Parliament describes the Government as "the most brutal and murderous in the whole of history," we recognize hyperbole or exaggeration, i.e. heaping up, not quite the same thing as turgidity, though sometimes borrowing its aid, as in the following rhapsody, in which an American publisher expresses his conviction that a contemporary novelist really is the goods: "Romancer, soldier, poet, gallant sportsman, great artist and great man, a Donn Byrne is born to bless this drab world of ours with his bold, colourful, high-hearted stories once in a hundred years. A nobler Byron, a more musical Dumas, a more vital Meredith, a swifter moving Scott—here he is, Donn Byrne!"<sup>1</sup>

The purely *high-flown* style is better represented by the following extract from a Yorkshire paper (1919): "They recognized it wasn't frothy turgid rhetoric which had been served up to them for years, it was the dynamite of facts, booming like a minute gun, awakening the dormant mental splendours of those imaginative industrious sons of toil, revealing to them the sophistical cogwheels of political vote-catching chicanery."

The elevated or "high-flying" style is called in French "le style élevé," the *high-flown* style is "le style ampoulé"—"*un discours ampoulé*: a high-flown discourse" (Miège, 1688). This is derived from Lat. "*ampulla*, a pot with a hollow belly; anything blown or puffed up, *ampullae*, pl.: big words, strong lines, high-flown stuff" (Littleton). The Latin

<sup>1</sup> In case the reader should be inclined to adopt towards this specimen of "blurb" the incredulous attitude of the Irishman on first seeing a graffito, I may say that it is taken verbatim from an advertisement in the American Mercury (May, 1926). Another American publisher, whose advertisement I have noticed, expresses himself more simply: "Wake up, you would-be intellectuals, and strain your throats in demand for the genius of all the ages."

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adjectives for *high-flown* were *tumidus* and *turgidus*, both meaning swollen:

Shall gentle Coleridge pass unnoticed here,

To turgid ode and tumid stanza dear?

(Byron, English Bards and Scotch Reviewers)

The corresponding German words are *aufgeblasen*, blown up, and *schwulstig*, from *schwellen*, to swell: "*eine schwulstige rede oder schreibart* a high strain; a bombast,<sup>1</sup> a tumid, high, high-flown, high-strained, bombastick, swelling, swollen or swollen, speech or stile" (Ludwig) The evidence of the early dictionaries is conclusive as to *high-flown* meaning swollen, not lofty, though the natural association with "flying" begins to appear in the 18th century, e.g. Johnson gives for it the two meanings, "elevated" and "turgid," while he defines "high-flying" as "extravagant in claims or opinions," which is quite a different thing.

The conclusion of the whole matter is that the *flown* of *high-flown* is from *flow*, used in Mid English of the swelling of a river, a sense surviving into the 17th century. It is especially common in the past participle: "Firste we come to Torrens Cedron, which in somer tyme is drye, and in wynter, and specyally in Lent, it is mervaylously flowen with rage of water" (Pilgrimage of Sir Richard Guylforde, 1506) Milton's "Sons of Belial, flown with insolence and wine" (Paradise Lost, 1, 501) were not "elevated," except in the modern slang sense of that word, they were what in America is called "full" or "tanked"; cf "The young gentleman is come in, Madam, very high flowne, but not so drunke as to forget your promise" (Brome, A Mad Couple Well Matched, III, 2; c. 1640).

### Howlet

The naming of birds from their characteristic cry is a recognized phenomenon. Not infrequently such names are punningly associated with familiar personal names. Thus

<sup>1</sup> Originally cotton stuffing.

## HOWLET

the curlew, Fr *courlus*, is sometimes called Louis in France. The fensman calls the heron "old Francis," a playful elaboration of the earlier *Frank*, "apparently a rendering of the sound made by the bird" (Oxford Dictionary). A more familiar example is Skelton's 16th-century "Philip Sparrow," while still earlier, in Piers Plowman, the bird is called by the contracted form Phip (cf the surname Phipps), both names being evidently suggested by the bird's chirp. I think it can be shown that *howlet* belongs to the same category.

As an eaglet is a little eagle, it seems often to be thought that the (*h*)*owlet* is a little (*h*)*owl*, which it is not, for the word was used in Mid-English of the adult bird, the true dim, *owlet*, not being recorded till a century later. *Howlet* is borrowed from Fr. "*hulotte* madge-howlet" (Cotgrave). This *hulotte* is the feminine of *Hulot*, older *Huelot*, a double dim., -el-ot, of the common Old French name *Hue*, our *Hugh*. The bird was also called *huet* and *huotte*, feminines of the dims *Huet* and *Huot*. *Hugh* was a favourite medieval name, with earlier English variants *Hew* and *How*, the same man being often called indifferently by either name.

The derivation usually given, from Old High Ger. *ule* (now *eule*), owl, influenced by Fr *huer*, to hoot, will obviously not account for the forms *huet* and *huotte*, mentioned above, as they have no trace of -l-. But there can be little doubt that the choice of the personal name for the bird was due to a punning association with the verb *huer*.

The dims of the name *Hugh* (*Hew*, *How*) have given a large number of surnames in English, e.g. *Hewett*, *Hewlett*, *Hullett*, *Howitt*, *Howlett*, *Hutchin* and *Houchin*, and the fact that several of these are used in dialect for the screech-owl seems to confirm the *Hugh* origin of *howlet*. Both "hewlett" and "hullett," or "jenny hullett," are in various parts of England used for *howlet*, and a 17th-century translation of Boileau's *Lutrin* renders *hibou*, the usual French word for owl, by "hot-houchin." Here, as in "madge-



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howlet" and "jenny-hullett," a new personal name is prefixed, when the origin of the older name is no longer realized. So also we have *hobgoblin* as an elaboration of *goblin*, which was also originally a personal name. Hob is one of the five pet forms of Robert, the others being Bob, Rob, Dob and Nob. Robert Bruce is addressed as "King Hob" in an English satirical song directed against him early in the 14th century.

### Jackanapes

In my *Romance of Words* (p. 41) I suggested that the origin of this odd-looking compound may be "Jack of Naples." I do not know that any fresh light has been thrown on the problem in recent years, but it may be of interest to summarize what is known about the word. It is first recorded in political lampoons assailing the unpopular William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, who was murdered at sea in 1450 (2 Henry VI, iv, 1). His badge was a clog and chain such as were attached to a tame monkey.

In *Political Poems and Songs*, vol. 2, edited by Wright for the *Rolls Series* (1861), he is the subject of three metrical attacks. The first, a song on the popular discontent at the disasters in France, refers to all the leading men of the day by their heraldic badges, to which the writer of the manuscript has appended their names. The allusions are clear to anyone who is acquainted with this episode of English history:

The Rote (Bedforde) is ded, the Swanne (Gloucetter) is goone,

The firy Cressett (Exccetter) hath lost his lyght,

Therefore Ingland may make gret mone,

Were not the helpe of Godde Almyght.

The Castelle (Roone) is wonne where care begowne

The Portecolys (Somerset) is leyde adowne;

Iclosid we have oure Welevette Hatte (Cardinall),

That keveryd us from mony stormys browne.

The White Lion (Northfolke) is leyde to slepe,

Thorough the envy of the Ape Clogge (Southfolk);

And he is bounden that oure dore shuld kepe,

That is Talbott oure goode dogge.

## JACKANAPES

### The second deals with Suffolk's arrest

Jack Napys, with his clogge,  
Hath tied Talbot oure gentille dogge,  
Wherfore Beaumont,<sup>1</sup> that gentille rache,<sup>2</sup>  
Hath brought Jack Napis in an evile cache.

### The third is on the death of Suffolk:

In the monethe of May, when gresse groweth grene,  
Flagrant in her floures, with swete savour,  
Jac Napes wolde one the see a maryner to ben,  
With his cloge and his cheyn, to seke more tresour.  
Suyche a payn prikkede hym, he asked a confessour.  
Nicolas<sup>3</sup> said, "I am redi thi confessour to be."  
He was holden so that he ne passede that hour.  
For Jac Napes soule Placebo<sup>4</sup> and Dirige<sup>5</sup>

The last line recurs, with slight variations, at the end of each of the nine stanzas.

From this it is clear (1) that Jack Napes was the nickname of William de la Pole, (2) that, for the name to have had any significance, it must already have been familiar English for a captive monkey, though it is not actually recorded in this more general sense till seventy years later. This is one more example of the fact that our nicknames and surnames often carry back the history of the words from which they are formed far beyond dictionary records<sup>6</sup> drawn from literary sources. From the early 16th century onward there is abundant documentary evidence for *jackanapes*, a

<sup>1</sup> Lord Beaumont, High Constable of England

<sup>2</sup> Sleuth-hound.

<sup>3</sup> The ship that stopped Suffolk in the Channel.

<sup>4</sup> The first word in the antiphon (Psalm cxvi. 9) at Vespers in the Office for the Dead.

<sup>5</sup> The first word in the antiphon (Psalm v. 8) at Matins in the Office for the Dead. Hence *dirge*

<sup>6</sup> This applies especially to compounds used in outspoken descriptions, e.g. *fathead*, first recorded by the Oxford Dictionary for 1842, was actually a surname in 1220, for John flathevit is in the Cockersand Cartulary for that year. Similarly *pennyfather*, a niggard, first recorded in the 16th century, was a common 13th-century nickname, surviving in the surname Pennefather.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

monkey If we had gramophone records of 14th-century conversations we should probably find that it was equally familiar to that age

That *jackanapes* has long been felt as containing the word "ape" is obvious For the *n-* of *napes*, the Oxford Dictionary compares Ned, Noll, etc., and for the final *-s* such surnames as Jacks, Hobbs, etc. This is not very convincing If *ape* was the original element of the word and recognized as such, it is hardly likely that it could have been arbitrarily altered in this way. Proper names regularly have fantastic variations played on them, common nouns hardly ever. There is no record of what would have been the normal form, viz. "Jack ape" (cf. jackass), and, although *jackanape* is also found, it does not occur before Shakespeare, who introduces it into the broken English of Dr. Caius: "By gar, me vill kill de priest; for he speak for a jack-an-ape to Anne Page" (*Merry Wives*, II, 3).

We know that tame apes<sup>1</sup> and marmosets were common medieval pets. We also know that exotic animals were frequently named, not from the countries of their origin, but from places with which they are vaguely associated. The *turkey* is a North-American bird, the *guinea-pig* was named from the Guineamen, or slave-ships, which brought it from Brazil (cf. *gallipot*), the *bantam*, which is a Japanese bird, bears the name of a place in Java, and so on.

What was in the Middle Ages the immediate source of supply of tame monkeys? In our own day it is Italy, though the Italian organ-grinder and his companion seem of late to have vanished from our streets. In the 15th century it was also Italy. In 1436 a patriotic Englishman wrote a Libel (= little book) of English Policy,<sup>2</sup> the burden of which is—

<sup>1</sup> *Ape* is Anglo-Saxon. *Monkey* (see p. 167) does not appear till the 16th century

<sup>2</sup> This poem has been reprinted by the Oxford University Press. The text here quoted is from Wright's *Political Poems* (v.ii.).

## JOLLY-BOAT

Cheryshe marchandyse, kepe thamyralté,  
That we be maysters of the narowe see.

One passage deals with luxury imports ("thynges of complacence") brought from Italy

The grete galces of Venecs and Fflorence  
Be wel ladene wyth thynges of complacence,  
Alle spicerye and of grocers ware,  
Wyth swete wynes, all manere of chaffare,<sup>1</sup>  
Apes and japes and marmusettes tawlede . . .

I am aware that Venice is not Naples, but, on the other hand, Florence is not a seaport. It seems quite possible that apes and marmosets, not to mention "japes," brought from Italy may have been associated with so well known a port as Naples, and that "Jack of Naples" may thus have become a regular name for a captive monkey. This would become *Jackanapes* as inevitably as "fustian of Naples" became "fustian-anapes," a material frequently mentioned in the 16th century "*tripe de velours* velure, mock velvet, fustian an apes" (Cotgrave)

This etymology is accepted by Webster.

### Jolly-boat

If schoolboys still read *Mariyat*, which it is to be hoped they do, they cannot but be intrigued by the names of the ship's boats as manned for "cutting-out" expeditions. In the 18th century, according to Falconer's *Marine Dictionary* (1771), merchant-ships seldom had more than two, viz a long-boat and a yawl. In addition to these, a man-of-war had, according to the same authority, the barge, "employed to carry the principal sea-officers and very unfit for sea," the pinnace and the cutter. The long-boat was later replaced by the launch. The captain's gig seems to date from c. 1800. It is not mentioned by the nautical dictionaries of the 18th century.

<sup>1</sup> Merchandise. Now hardly used except as a verb (*chaffer*) meaning to haggle. It is Mid Eng *cheap-fare*, commerce, from an unrecorded Anglo-Sax. *ceap-faru*, trading-journey.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

Some of these names are rather mysterious. *Launch* looks simple, but has probably nothing to do with the verb to *launch*. It comes from Sp. *lancha*, which is supposed to be a Malay word. Pinnace is of quite uncertain origin. As a clipper is a ship that "clips," it might be supposed that a cutter is a boat that "cuts," but it is much more probably a sailor's perversion of *catur*, a word from the Malabar coast which is recorded in English long before we find any mention of the cutter. Another boat name from the East is *dinghy*, which is Bengali.

Sailors excel all other people in the gift of perverting words from their original forms. If they call a kind of craft a *jolly-boat*, it is a reasonable inference that it has nothing to do with the word *jolly*, and at least dubious whether it is even, etymologically, a "boat." Some dictionaries unhesitatingly derive this *jolly* from Dan. *jolle*, a small boat, a word of Low German origin found also in Swedish (*julle*) and Dutch (*jol*). This is impossible. In all these languages the initial *j-* has the sound of our *y-*. Sailors do not take their foreign words from dictionaries: they pick them up by ear in foreign ports. Dan. *jolle* or Dutch *jol* was duly adopted by nautical English in the 17th century and became our *yawl*, just as it became Fr. *yole*.<sup>1</sup>

It is suggested in Hobson-Jobson<sup>2</sup> that *jolly-boat* is a corruption, via the form *jolywat*, of *gallevat*, a word now obsolete, but well recorded in nautical English from c. 1600.

If the sailor can convert the ship-name *Superb* into "soup-tub," or make Fr. *langouste*, a kind of crab, into "long oyster," the substitution of *jolly-boat* for *jolywat* would obviously be well within his powers. It is even possible that the older name was shortened to *jolly*, and that the explanatory "boat" was added later. The fact that *jolly-boat* is absent from the nautical dictionaries of the 18th century rather suggests that, though current among sailors, it was not recognized by the official vocabulary.

<sup>1</sup> Formerly called "isle de Norvège."

<sup>2</sup> See p. 42, n. 2.

## JOLLY-BOAT

The Tudor warship, like the 18th-century merchantman, carried few boats. We find mention in Naval Accounts, 1495-7, of "the Sovereigne with her grete bote and jollywatt," apparently corresponding to the long-boat and yawl of later days (v.s.) The Oxford Dictionary quotes, from Purchas (1613), "As soone as I anchored, I sent Master Spooner and Samuell Squire in my gellywatte to sound the depths within the sands." In the Travels of Peter Mundy (1634) a somewhat similar job is given to the *jolly-boat*: "Having tried the currant sundrie tymes with our jolly boate." Earlier still, in the relation of the last voyage of Drake and Hawkins (1595), we find the simple *jolly*: "That day the Pegasus jolly was going on shore for water, carrying no garde. The Spaniards perceiving it came downe upon them." These examples, suggesting the identity of the *jolly* or *jolly-boat* with the *jolywat*, are much older than those given by the Oxford Dictionary,<sup>1</sup> in which the earliest quotations are *jolly-boat* from Chambers's Cyclopædia (1727-41) and *jolly* from Marryat.

Whether the *jolywat* is identical with the *gallevat*, which is taken to be an Eastern corruption of Port. *galeota*, a diminutive of *galea*, a galley, is a matter of dispute. The initial consonant is an obvious difficulty. The Oxford Dictionary further objects that the *gallevat* was equipped with sails, had forty or fifty rowers, and carried guns. This does not seem a serious objection. Names of craft have always been very vaguely used. The frigate,<sup>2</sup> another mysterious word, was, for the Elizabethan sailors, a rowing-boat. Most of the boat names occurring in this article are, or have been, used both of small craft and larger vessels, and the galley-punt of the Deal fishermen is neither a galley nor a punt.

<sup>1</sup> For the earliest see Macle hose's reprint of Hakluyt, x, 241. Peter Mundy's Travels (ed. Temple) was not available when the editors of the Oxford Dictionary were occupied with J.

<sup>2</sup> Revived, during World War II, along with corvette, to describe light naval craft engaged on convoy duty.

## Kestrel

a

This name for a kind of hawk is recorded for the 15th century as *castrell*, with later variants in *kest-*, *kist-*, *kaist-*, *keist-*. The bird was also called a *stamel* (see Twelfth Night, ii, 5), earlier *steingal*, from Anglo-Sax *stan-gella*, stone-yeller, from its voice, or *wind-hover*, from its way of sustaining itself in the air. It is well known to be from Fr. *crécérelle*, a dim. of *crécelle*, with the same meaning in Old French, but the Oxford Dictionary traces its history no farther, while Webster suggests a Lat. *cristarellus*, from *crista*, crest, hardly a good description of a bird that has no crest.

The clue to the origin of the name is to be found in the works of Columella, whose great agricultural treatise, *De Re Rustica*, was written c. 60 B.C. It was from this author that Cooper took his description of the Lat. "*tinnunculus*. a kinde of haukes; a kistrell or a kastrell; a steingall. They use to set them to pigeon-houses, to make doves to love the place, because they feare away other haukes with their ringing voice." A variant of the Latin name is *tintinnuculus*. It comes from Lat. "*tinnire* to ring and make a cleare sounde as metall doth" (Holyoak, 1612), and the bird was obviously named from its voice. Ambroise Paré, the famous 16th-century French surgeon, also records the popular belief "*La crescerelle de son naturel espouvente les espreuvers (sparrow-hawks) de sorte qu'ils fuyent sa veue et sa voix*."

Cotgrave has "*cercerelle*: a rattle, clicket, or clapper; also a kastrell, steingall", "*crecerelle*: a rattle, or clack, for children to play with; also a kestrell, fleingall," and "*cresserelle*: a rattle, or clack, for children; also a kestrell, stanniell, fleingall." The last entry is curious, because *fleingall*, a misprint for *steingall*, is really the same word as *stanniell*. This misprint, due to confusion between *st* and *fl*, resulted in a "ghost-word" recorded in many later dictionaries.

*Crécelle* and *crécérelle* had in Old French the special mean

## LEGERDEMAIN

ing of a "lazer's clicket or clapper" with which a leper warned people not to approach him. It was perhaps this particular sense of the word that caused the nickname to be applied to a bird which was credited with the gift of frightening other hawks away with its "ringing voice."

### Legerdemain

The Oxford Dictionary derives this synonym of "sleight of hand" from Fr *léger de main*, light of hand. This etymology is quite correct, but the Dictionary fails to deal with the serious objection that *legerdemain* is a noun only, and has never existed as such in French. Moreover, though Fr. *léger de main* means light of touch, it is an adjective and does not appear ever to have been used in connection with conjuring. If it had been so used, its Mid English equivalent would rather have been "sly of hand" than "sleight of hand," for *sleight* is the abstract noun from *sly*, which, before its degeneration, meant wise or skilful (see quotation from Wyclif, p. 146).

*Sleight* is in Chaucer a general term for adroitness, dexterity, occurring also in such compounds as "sleight of heart," "sleight of wit," while "sleight of hand" is found side by side with *legerdemain* from the early 15th century onward. The simple *sleight* was also used of a trick or knack:

So did the villaine to her plate and play,  
And many pleasant trickes before her show,  
To turne her eyes from his intent away:  
For he in slights and juggling feates did flow,  
And of legier demayne the mysteries did know.

(Faerie Queene, V, ix, 13)

The spelling *slicht* for *sleight* is recorded in the 14th century, and I suggest that *legerdemain* came into existence as a mistranslation of "sleight of hand," by a vague confusion with the unrelated adjective *slicht*, of which the regular French equivalent is *léger*. Such mistranslations were not



uncommon during the bilingual age in England; cf. the historical *frankpledge*, the Anglo-Norman translation of Anglo-Sax. *frithborh*, peace-pledge, the first element having been misunderstood as meaning "free."

## Merry grig

There are some Christian names which are traditionally associated with domestic service. Familiar examples are Thackeray's Jeames and the Abigail who dates from Beaumont and Fletcher's *Scornful Lady* (1610). Congreve makes a character say, "I am brought to fine uses, to become a botcher of second-hand marriages between Andrews and Abigails" (*Way of the World*, v, 1). Andrew was especially used of the conjurer's assistant, or *zany*,<sup>1</sup> who excited laughter by parodying his master's tricks; hence "merry Andrew" for a kind of recognized jester. Gregory was also a stock name for a man-servant, e.g. in *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, so it seems possible that the "merry Andrew" and the "merry grig" (old pet-form of Gregory) may once have been identical. There is, however, no evidence of this, the "merry grig" dating from the early 16th century in the sense of "good fellow."

The word *grig* is used in dialect, like many other familiar names of various small animals, but the *grig*, cricket, given in some dialect glossaries, seems to be an unwarranted inference from the expression "as merry as a cricket." This association may have coloured the later sense of "merry grig," originally a jovial blade, boon companion, in which sense both *grig* and *Gregory* were once used without the "merry." It may be noted that Grégoire is, or was, French slang for a toper, frequently rhyming with *boire* in drinking-songs of the 16th century. Gregory is used (1590) by Massinger, who has "my Gregories," i.e. my boon companions, in a context similar to that in which Brome (1638) has "my grigs." Gregorians were still a convivial society

<sup>1</sup> It. *Zanni*, dialect pet-form of *Giovanni*, John.

## MONKEY

in the 18th century, and the following lines from Crabbe are suggestive:

Griggs and Gregorians here their meetings hold,  
Convivial sects and "bucks" alert and bold.

(The Borough, x, 349)

### Monkey

*Ape* is Anglo-Sax. *apa*, a common Teutonic word; cf. Dutch *aap*, Ger. *affe* (whence *nachaffen*, to ape). As the ape does not belong to the fauna of the old Teutonic world, it is probable that the name was borrowed in prehistoric times from some non-Aryan race. *Monkey* is not found in English till 1530, i e. about a century later than *jackanapes* (p. 158), and the earliest records suggest that, like the latter word, it was especially used of tame monkeys or marmosets. There are also an Old Fr. *monequin*, which looks like a word of Flemish origin, and an obsolete It. "*monicchio*: a pugge, a munkie, an ape" (Florio). The relation of these words to each other and to *monkey* is obscure.

The conferring of personal names on animals is a familiar phenomenon. A notable example is Fr *renard*, a fox, from the famous beast-epic of *Renard le goupil* (Lat. *vulpiculus*, dim. of *vulpes*), where Renard represents the Old High German name Reginhart, strong in counsel. The name is akin to Reginald, and Spenser calls the fox Reynold. *Renard* has completely replaced *goupil*, described by Cotgrave as a "vieux mot." Our earliest versions of the Reynard saga are in Old French, but most of the names of the animals are Teutonic, Noble, the lion, and Chantecler, the cock, being probably later French additions to the original cycle. Bruin, brown, comes to us from the Flemish version, translated into English by Caxton.

The Low German version, Reinke de Vos, dates from 1498. In 1794 it was translated into modern German by Goethe. Reinke is a Low German dim. of Reginhart. In this version the ape is named Martin and his son is Moneke, a dim. of some old German personal name which still exists

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

as a surname with many variants (Muncke, Mohnike, Mohnke, etc.). Heinrich Moneke and Johann Godeke were envoys from Prussia to England in 1403. I fancy that the choice of the name and its ready acceptance in England were partly due to popular association with *monk*, Ger. *monch*, Dutch and Low Ger *monik*. In my picture-book days I always associated the cowed "monk" with the "monkey," and I find, on inquiry, that the childish experience of many potent, grave, and reverend philologists was similar to my own.

Although our loan-words from modern German are few in number and mostly recent in date, our borrowings from the Low German dialects of the North Sea and Baltic coasts are comparatively ancient. We know that German court musicians were "imported" as early as the 15th century, which explains the early occurrence of *fife* (see p 83), and I see no difficulty in supposing that German showmen may have introduced their *Moneke* into England at an equally early date.

### Mop

The earlier form of *mop* was *map* (15th century). In an Etymological Dictionary which I published in 1921, I gave, with many misgivings, the traditional etymology from Old Fr *mappe*, napkin. The obvious objections are that a napkin is not a mop, that Old Fr. *mappe* is a very rare word (for the usual *nappe*), found only in the Walloon dialect, and that there is no reason why we should have given a foreign name to so elementary and necessary an implement. A further objection, and one which puts the Walloon word quite out of court, is that Mid Eng *mappe* is short for an earlier *mapple*, just as *buff*, leather and colour, is short for an early *buffle*, Old French for a wild ox (buffalo).

When we find in the Promptorium Parvulorum (1440) the entry "malkyne, mappyl, or oven swepare," and another entry "mappel, idem quod malkyn," we are getting warm.

## MOP

The application of personal names to handy devices is a familiar linguistic phenomenon. The burglar's *jemmy* will occur to every reader. The contrivance which destroys our shirt-buttons is well known all over England as a *dolly* or *peggy*. *Malkin*, which is an old diminutive of Matilda or Maud (Mid English also Malde), probably also of Mary (familiarily Mal), was colloquial Mid English for a wench, a slut, and a mop. Later it came to mean a rag-doll and a scarecrow, in both of which senses it is still in dialect use (e.g. in Adam Bede). *Malkin* is also a dialect nickname for the hare, in which connection it is worth noting that *mapkin* is similarly used of the rabbit. It seems a reasonable inference that *mapple*, like *malkin*, was originally a personal name.

That name is Mabel, for the older Amabel, a common Mid. English font-name, to which we owe the modern surnames Mabbs, Mabley, Mabbott, Maple, Mapple, Mapleson, and Mobbs. Neither the substitution of *-p* for *-b*, nor the change to *-o-* (cf. Molly for Mally, i.e. Mary, Moggy for Maggy, etc.) is at all abnormal.

The rather pretty name Mabel seems to have been especially rustic. Writing in 1863, Charlotte Yonge says, "It is still used among the northern peasantry." Soon after that date it came into fashion and had a great vogue during the second half of the 19th century. But in early records it often carries the implication of slut, hag, etc. In the Friar's Tale, Satan addresses the cunning old crone as "Mabely, myn owene moder deere" (Chaucer, D. 1626). In the 16th-century play of Jacob and Esau occurs the line "Come out, thou mother Mab, out olde rotten witche."

We now think of Queen Mab as a dainty apparition with gauzy petticoats and gossamer wings; but to the Middle Ages elves were malevolent demons and their queen a grisly hag, to whom was naturally given a proper name already used as a term of vituperation. She was even identified with the nightmare (see p. 71).

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

*Map* was used in the 16th century for a mop, and the verb to *mab* meant to dress like a slattern<sup>1</sup>. We have also *mabble* or *mobble*, to wrap up the head. Shakespeare's "mobled<sup>1</sup> Queen" (*Hamlet*, II, 2) had "a clout about that head where late the diadem stood." So also the variant *mob* was applied in the 17th century both to a naughty lady and to a *négligé* attire, especially the morning dress of the slattern. Steele, in the *Spectator*, alludes to "wrapping gowns and dirty linen, with all that huddled economy of dress which passes under the general name of a mob." This survives in the *mob-cap*, which was earlier a simple *mob*: "Her head-dress was a Brussels-lace mob, peculiarly adapted to the charm and turn of her features" (*Clarissa Harlowe*).

*Mop* was not only used of a rag-doll, but also playfully of a baby or a young girl, a "flapper," and in this sense often lengthened to *mops* or *moppet*. On the latter was rhymed *poppet* (like Peggy for Meggy), and this was later confused with *puppet*, which is of French origin (cf. Fr. *poupée*, a doll).

### Mulligrubs

This name for a fit of the sulks is now rather old-fashioned and I doubt whether the modern child would understand it. The earliest record in the *Oxford Dictionary* is for 1599, but the word must be very much older, for *Mulligrub*, a "sharking vintner," is a character in Marston's *Dutch Courtesan* (1605). It is sufficiently obvious that only a word of fairly long standing would thus be used as a nickname (cf. the case of *haphazard*, p. 153).

In 1769, Isaac Bickerstaffe adapted Molière's *Tartufe* as *The Hypocrite*, giving to the principal character the name Mawworm, from the common noun "mawworm," an intestinal parasite. I think it can be shown that a *mulligrub* was originally a "mawworm."

<sup>1</sup> A Warwickshire word. Other words from Shakespeare's native county are "*blood-boltered Banquo*" (*Macbeth*, IV, 1) and "*nook-shotten isle*" (*Henry V*, III, 5).

## Oriel

The Oxford Dictionary describes *mullgrubs* as a "grotesque arbitrary formation," meaning a fit of spleen or megrims, hence jocularly stomach-ache. With all deference, I have very little faith in "grotesque arbitrary formations," nor do I agree with the suggested order of meanings, which would be against all semantic experience. Cf. "spleen," "megrims," "vapours," all originally physical, and the dialect "mumps," e.g. "*mullgrubs* or *mumps*: a counterfeit fit of the sullens" (Dictionary of the Canting Crew, c. 1700). It happens that the earliest literary example has to do with mental discomfort, but the oldest dictionary records have the form *mouldy-grubs*, explained as *tormina ventris*, vulgarly "belly-ache," in connection with which it may be noted that ill-tempered grumbling is sometimes called "belly-aching" by the unrefined and is recognized in this sense as American slang by Webster. The second example in the Oxford Dictionary is "Whose dog lyes sick o' the mulli-grubs?" This suggests the disease called worms or bots to which some animals are subject. The Latin name for this trouble is "*verminatio* a wringing paine of the guts" (Holyoak) or "*lumbricus*: an earthly worme, also a belly or maw worm" (ibid.).

*Mull* is an old word for mould, and *mully* still means mouldy in Norfolk. *Grub* once had the sense of Holyoak's "earthly worm" and is glossed by *lumbricus* or *vermiculus* in Latin dictionaries of the 17th century. The belief that diseases were caused by internal parasites is very old and widespread, and it is clear, at least to me, that the *mully*, or *mouldy*, *grub* was originally a "mawworm."

## Oriel

Oriel College, Oxford, is properly St. Mary's College, a name still perpetuated in St. Mary's Hall. At the foundation of the College (1326) a grant was made of a messuage known as "the Oriole." This was occupied by the provost and fellows, the "society of the Oriole." It was probably a

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

house with a conspicuous oriel window. An *oriel* is now, according to the Oxford Dictionary, "a large recess with a window, of polygonal plan, projecting from the outer face of the wall of a building and either supported from the ground or on corbels." Its earliest meaning is a little doubtful, but it seems likely that it always formed outwardly a projection and inwardly a recess or sanctum, such as may be seen in many college halls. The word has been much discussed. In 1831 a Mr. W. Hamper contributed to *Archæologia* an exhaustive article on all the known occurrences and supposed meanings of the word, concluding with the grotesque suggestion that the *oriel* is named as being "o'er all!"

The oldest forms are Anglo-Fr *oriel* (c. 1200) and Med Lat. *oriolum* (c. 1250), explained by Du Cange as "porticus, atrium." These forms would correspond phonetically to a Lat. *aureolum* (cf Fr *oreille* from Lat. *auricula*), a fact which has led some etymologists to see in the *oriel* a gilded apartment. The *aureolum* which has become *oriel* has, however, no connection with *aurum*, gold.

The earliest record of Old Fr *oriel* seems to show a meaning very similar to that of the modern word. In Stanley's *Memorials of Canterbury* we read, "Robert de Broc, who had known the palace during the time of its occupation by his uncle Randolph, called out, 'Follow me, good sirs, I will show you another way,' and got into the orchard behind the kitchen. There was a staircase leading thence to the ante-chamber between the hall and the Archbishop's bedroom. The wooden steps were under repair, and the carpenters had gone to their dinner, leaving their tools on the stairs. Fitzurse seized an axe, and the others hatchets, and thus armed they mounted to the ante-chamber, broke through an oriel window which looked out on the garden, entered the hall from the inside," etc.

This is a free, and not quite clear, rendering of the almost contemporary account to be found in *Guernes de Pont-*

## ORIEL

Sainte-Maxence's Vie Saint Thomas le Martir, of which the essential passage runs,

A Pius de la charAbre out un oriol fermé,  
Dreit devers le chardin, qui out maint jor esté.  
Pur refaire crent dunc abatu li degré,  
E li carpentier erent a lur disner ale.  
A cel oriol sunt li chevalier turne

The Old French context rather suggests that Robert managed to clamber up to the *oriel* and let down a ladder for his companions.

The Med. Lat. *oriolum* occurs in Matthew Paris, who speaks of "atrium nobilissimum in introitu quod porticus vel oriolum appellatur" It would appear from this that such a structure was a very ornamental *atriolum*. The Latin name for a hall or court was *atrium*, but the Romans also borrowed *aula* from Greek, and it was the latter word that prevailed, to the exclusion of *atrium*, in Med. Latin. The correct diminutive of *aula* is *aulula*, but, under the influence of *atriolum*, Late Latin apparently adopted *aulaeolum*, from *aulaeum*, a curtain, in the sense of little hall <sup>1</sup>

That this is not a mere conjecture appears from the fact that *aulaeolum*, sanctuary, shrine or oratory, is recorded by Du Cange from the Bollandists' Martyrologium. Here is the entry in full "*Auleolum*· sacellum, ab aula, ecclesia, de qua suo loco, Miraculo S. Urbani Mart. tom. 6 Maii pag. 18· 'In qua benedictione dum carpentarii vellent aptare analogium ad sermonicandum de auleolo S. Urbani, ubi solebat poni corpus Urbani pretiosi martyris, exigente ratione temporis membratum disjunctum nullatenus redintegrare valuerunt.' "

This passage seems to mean that in the course of this consecration, some joiners, while attempting to fit a pulpit in the shrine or oratory of St. Urban, where the body of the

<sup>1</sup> There would also be a natural connection between a *sanctum* and a curtain. Cf. Late Lat. *corina*, used in the double sense of small court and curtain.



precious martyr Urban used to be laid, to meet the exigencies of the moment divided him into joints and then were quite unable to put him together again. It may be taken as proving the existence of *auleolum* in something like the required sense.

Although a monkish scribe would naturally write *auleolum*, the popular pronunciation would almost certainly be *aureolum*. French has an invincible antipathy to the recurrence of *l-l*, *n-n*, or *r-r*. Thus Old Fr. *lossignol* becomes *rossignol*, Old Fr. *gonfanon* becomes *gonfalon*, Old Fr. *couloir* becomes *culoir*, and the same phenomenon was common in Vulgar Latin (see *pilgrim*, p. 180). Nor is this *aureolum* only a conjectural form. In a 15th-century Latin-German glossary published by Dicfenbach in 1846 occurs the gloss "*aulea vel aureola* fur hang (= Ger. *vorhang*, curtain)." The fact that it is used here in the true sense, and not the "oriel" sense, of *auleolum*, makes no difference to the phonetic argument.

## Palmistry

As casuistry stands for the art of the casuist, it might be supposed that *palmistry* is the art of the "palmist." So it is, but not etymologically. "Palmist" is quite a modern word, introduced with that odd revival of medieval superstition that characterized the later 19th century. The earlier name for a hand-reader was "palmester," the word used by Cooper to explain *chiromantes*. "Palmester" again is not a true word, but a back-formation from *palmistry*, a common word in the Middle Ages. The oldest form is Mid. Eng. *palmestrie*, used by Lydgate and Gower. This is a disguised compound, "palm-mystery."

*Mystery* is an old word for craft or calling. Salvation Yeo's father "exercised the mystery of a barber-surgeon" (Westward Ho! ch. 7). Its modern spelling, for *mistry*, is due to mistaken association with the other word *mystery* (Gr. *μυστήριον*, rite, secret ceremony), an associa-

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tion which at an early date influenced its meaning, giving it a suggestion of secret skill. This association would also be helped by the existence, of such craft-gilds as the "freemasons,"<sup>1</sup> with their cryptic code. The two "mysteries" are sometimes punned on by the Elizabethans.

We still speak of the "art and mystery" of a trade, a phrase corresponding to Fr "art et métier." *Mystery*, craft, corresponds in sense to Fr *métier*, earlier "*mestier*: a trade, occupation, misterie, handicraft" (Cotgrave), which is usually derived from Lat *ministerium*, service, but also represents Old Fr. *maistier*, Lat. *magisterium*,<sup>2</sup> mastery. The form of *mystery* is due rather to its representing Mid. English and Old Fr *maistrie*, mastership, skill, the vowel of which has been thinned like that of *master* (*Mr.*), now pronounced *mister*. The "crafts or mysteries of York," whose religious plays<sup>3</sup> (c. 1430) have come down to us, were called "maistries."

Mid. Eng. *maistrie* (also *mestrie*) meant skill, knowledge, and is used of a magic trick by the wicked "chanoun" in the Canon's Yeoman's Tale:

Taketh good heede ye shul wel seen at eye  
That I wol doon a maistrie er I go

(Chaucer, G 1059)

This *maistrie*, *mestrie*, already popularly associated with "mysterious" knowledge, would be a natural translation of

<sup>1</sup> Originally a gild of highly skilled travelling masons, of whom we find records from the 14th century onward. Fr *franc-maçon* and Ger *freimaurer* are adapted from English. The reason for the "free" is much disputed, but it is, at any rate, a curious coincidence that they were workers in "freestone," from Old Fr. *franche pierre*, noble stone.

<sup>2</sup> The *magister*, master, was the "major", the *minister*, servant, was the "minor."

<sup>3</sup> The plays themselves are often called "mysteries" or "mystery-plays," and at one time it was believed that they were so called because performed by gilds ("misteries") of craftsmen. This use of "mystery" is, however, comparatively modern in English, and corresponds to the French use of *mystère*, religious rite, for a sacred play.

Gr. *μαντεία*, divination, whence *chiro-mancy*, lit. hand-divination, and one *-m-* of "palm-*g*aistrie" would automatically disappear. Some of the early lexicographers seem to have recognized the connection, e.g. Holyoak has "*chuiromantia*. palmaistrie."

## Pearmain

The little book which was my horticultural guide, philosopher and friend describes the Worcester *pearmain* as of "fair" quality, with the added faint praise, "Its colour sells the crops." This hardly does justice to a very worthy apple, which, in the Middle Ages, was a warden pear<sup>1</sup>. In the medieval Latin dictionaries *pearmain* is always glossed by *volemum*, a pear mentioned by Virgil and explained by a Roman etymologist as so called "quod volam compleat magnitudine," i.e. because it fills the palm of the hand with its bulk<sup>1</sup>. The *Catholicon Anglicum* (1483) has "*parmayn* volenum, Anglice a warden." Cooper (1573) has "*volema* great peares, wardens." The 1650 edition of Cotgrave still has "*poire de parmain* the permaine pear," but, by about 1600, the word had begun to be used of an apple, its only modern sense, though in the current spelling we may perhaps trace some association with its past history.

Holyoak (1612) gives, in his list of apples, "*pompire* or *pearemaine* melaprium, pyrmalum." Here we catch the word in the act. *Pompire*, *melaprium* and *pyrmalum*, all meaning "apple-pear," suggest that the apple was named from possessing some feature or quality regularly associated with the *pearmain-pear* or *warden-pear*. By the 18th century the pear has definitely become, for Johnson, "an apple."

The word is Old Fr. *parmain*, *permain*, used of both fruits, its form and masculine gender (while *poire* and *pomme* are

<sup>1</sup> Isidore of Seville, who mentions this etymology, adds, "Quidam autem volenum Gallica lingua bonum et magnum intellegunt." Walde, deriving *volemum* from Oscan *valaemom*, best, suggests that Isidore's "Gallica" may be a vague term for an unknown tongue.

## PEARMAIN

feminine) suggesting that it may have originally been an adjective applied to any kind of fruit. Editors of Old French texts seem to render *permain* arbitrarily by apple or pear. Thus, in the 12th-century *Vie de Saint-Gilles*, "cooinz, permeins, pesches e fies" is explained as quinces, apples, peaches and figs, while in the epic poem *Doon de la Roche*, also 12th-century, "pomes et poires et parmain" is supposed to mean apples, pears, and "pears." It survives in Normandy in the feminine form *permaine* (sc *pomme*). A plausible etymology from Lat. *permagnus*, very large, has been suggested; but it is hardly likely that *permagnus* should have passed, in this one special sense, into French, which rejected the simple *magnus*<sup>1</sup> in favour of its synonym *grandis*.

The origin usually accepted connects the word with the town of Parma. The Oxford Dictionary says, "M.E. a. OF *par-*, *permain*, app. ad. L. *parmanus* of Parma: see W. Foerster in *Zeitschr. f. Rom. Phil.* 1899, xxiii, 423." So also Webster. The Oxford Dictionary here departs somewhat from its usually cautious attitude. There is not an atom of evidence to connect the warden pear or the pearmain apple with Parma, or with Italy at all, nor is there any record of a Latin adjective *Parmanus*.

As the warden pear was probably so-called from its keeping qualities (v 1), it seems reasonable to suppose that its alternative name may also have referred to its "permanency." There is an Old French verb *permaindre* or *parmaindre*, to endure, from Lat. *permanere*<sup>2</sup>. It occurs in 15th-century Scots as *parmayne*. Old French sometimes formed adjectives from verbs (see examples, p. 146). So I conjecture that from *parmaindre*, to last, was evolved an adjective *parmain*, applied especially to fruits of keeping quality.

<sup>1</sup> The only certain survival of *magnus* in French is in the name *Charlemagne*, of learned formation.

<sup>2</sup> It really represents Vulgar Lat. *permanere*, cf. *remander*, which is Old Fr. *remaindre*, Vulgar Lat. *remanere*, for *remanēre*.

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That the word existed appears from the Old French adverb à *parmain*, usually explained as "immediately," but meaning also, in early records, "in perpetuity," an idea more often rendered in Old French by *permanablement*. Lacurne de Sainte-Palaye quotes, from an Old French poem of the 13th century:

Amors m'ont si par tot le cors saisi,  
Que a parmain iert ma joie fenie,

which may be rendered, "Love has so enthralled my whole being that my happiness will be ended 'for keeps.' "

The *warden* pear, Mid. Eng. *wardon*, is chiefly familiar, in collocation with *pie*, to those Victorian survivors who still appreciate the Ingoldsby Legends. It was no doubt from Shakespeare (*Winter's Tale*, iv, 2) that Barham borrowed *warden-pie*:

And near this fleshless skeleton a pitcher small did lie  
And a mouldy piece of "kissing-crust," as from a warden-pie.  
(Nell Cook)

The records of the word show that *warden* and *parmain* were formerly used indifferently for a hard winter pear used for stewing or baking. Palsgrave defines *wardon* as "poire à cuire, poire de garde." Cotgrave explains *poire de garde* as "a warden, or winter peare, a peare which may be kept verie long." Johnson notes "wardens bak'd" as a street-cry, with the wise comment, "I know not whence denominated."

There can be little doubt that Mid. Eng. *wardon* is an Anglo-French derivative (like Fr. *jeton* from *jeter*) of Old Fr. *warder*, to keep, a north-eastern variant of *garder*. The later spelling is a popular assimilation to the more familiar word *warden*.

## Petronel

A *petronel* was a flint-lock fire-arm intermediate in size between a musket and a pistol. It was used especially by

## PETRONEL

the cavalry. The Oxford Dictionary dates it from 1577 and derives it from Fr. *pétrincal*, dialect form of *poitrinal*, from *poitrine*, breast, chest: "So called because the butt end rested against the chest in firing." I regard this theory as a hoary superstition, perhaps due to the way in which the weapon was slung or fired, and to the 16th-century pronunciation of Fr. *-oi-*, of which we have an example in *roide*, stiff, pronounced *raide* and now so spelt. The belief dates back to the 16th century, and various explanations are given. The earliest is that of Ambroise Paré, the "father of modern surgery," who speaks of the "mousquets poitrinals, que l'on ne couche en joue, à cause de leur calibre gros et court, mais qui se tirent de la poitrine." Minsheu describes a *petronell* as a "horseman's peece first used in the Pyrenean mountaines, which hanged them alwayes at their breast, readie to shoote, as they doe now at the horse's breast." This information is derived from Claude Fauchet, perhaps the earliest French antiquary, whose interesting *Antiquités françoises et gauloises* was published in 1579. Edward Phillips, Milton's nephew, tells us, in his *New World of Words*, that this "kind of harquebuse, or horseman's peece, is so called, because it is to aim at a horse's brest, as it were *pouctrinel*."

When we turn from fiction to fact, we find that the oldest French name was "*petrinal*: a petronell, or horseman's peece" (Cotgrave). The same dictionary records "*poictrinal*: a great, and heavy petronell, shorter, but of a wider bore than a musket." The French word appears to be borrowed either from It. "*petronello*, *pietronello*. a petronell" (Florio), or from Sp. "*pedreñal*: a petronell, a horseman's peece, ita dict. quod silice petra incenditur" (Minsheu, Spanish Dict.). Thus Minsheu knew the true origin of the name, though he put the fiction in his later work. We find various other forms in Italian and Spanish, but they all go back to It. *pietra*, *petra*, or Sp. *pedra*, *pedra*, stone, flint, and can have no connection with derivatives of Lat. *pectus*, breast (It. *petto*,

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Sp. *pecho*). The form of our word suggests that it came straight from Italian

The *petronel* dates from the substitution of the wheel-lock or flint-lock for the old match-lock and there is evidence that this substitution was first effected in the cavalry. Ger. *flinte*, musket, from Old Dutch, is another example of the naming of a fire-arm from its principal feature. Another is Fr. *fusil*, whence our *fusilier*. This comes from Med. Lat. *focile*, steel for striking sparks. It was commonly spelt *fusee* or *fuzee* in the 17-18th centuries, e.g. in Robinson Crusoe.

On the etymology of *petronel* I had many years ago a correspondence with the late Sir Frederick Pollock, whose encyclopædic learning included an expert knowledge of early weapons. He ended by accepting the etymology proposed above. It is also adopted by Webster.

## Pilgrim

There is a class of words which some Continental philologists call "European words," because they have been adopted by all the civilized languages of Europe. Such words are often the names of exotic commodities, such as *pepper*, taken immediately from Latin, but ultimately from the East, in almost prehistoric times, or *tea*, of much more recent adoption from Chinese. There are two important groups of early "European words" of Latin origin. One of them includes those terms the general adoption of which points to the pre-eminence of the Romans in trade, war, the arts of peace and administration, while the other consists of "Church words."

In the case of both these groups of Latin words it sometimes happened that the Teutons made a choice different from that of the Romance nations. We have already seen this in the case of *Kaiser* (p. 62). *Church*, Gr. *κυριακά*,  
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from Κύριος, Lord, is a striking example from the Christian group, the Romance languages preferring *ecclesia*, whence Fr. *église* and our place-name Eccles, the latter due to the converted ancient Britons. *Pilgrim* has been universally accepted, e.g. Ger *pilgrim* (usually *pulger*), Dutch *pelgrim*, Old Norse *pilagrinnr*, though, as often happens, there are native coinages which compete with the imported word, e.g. Dutch *bedevaert*, prayer journey, Ger. *wallfahrt*, wander journey, from *wallen*, cognate with Eng *walk*, and *fahren*, to travel, fare

The ultimate origin of the word is simple. It is Lat. *peregrinus*,<sup>1</sup> stranger, foreigner, from *pereger*, one abroad, from *per*, through, *ager*, field, land, but the form of the English word and its method of adoption need some explanation.

There is in many languages an instinctive tendency to corrupt a word in which the sound of *l*, *n*, or *r*<sup>2</sup> is repeated, by substituting another sound from the same group. This is called "dissimilation" (see *oriel*, p. 176). Such dissimilation was common in Vulgar Latin, e.g. Fr. *flaver*, to smell, sniff, is Vulgar Lat *flagrare*, for classical *fragrare*. One of the Roman grammarians whose works have survived warns his pupils to say *flagellum*,<sup>3</sup> not *fragellum*.

For *peregrinus* the Romans said *pelegrinus*. This form is recorded in an inscription of the 4th century and has given all the descended words, except Sp. *peregrino*. The *-m* of *pilgrim* is due to a Teutonic fondness for that final, especially exemplified in English, e.g. *vellum* (Fr. *velin*), *venom* (Fr. *venin*), *rogram* (Old Fr. *gros gram*), etc. The word was adopted in Old High German in the 9th century, and is recorded in English, also as *pelegrim*, from the 12th. Both

<sup>1</sup> The "peregrine falcon" was so called because caught on its passage

<sup>2</sup> This applies to other sounds also, but these three liquids furnish the simplest examples

<sup>3</sup> Hence Eng. *flail*. I am told that in Norfolk this is sometimes corrupted to *frail*. Thus word-history repeats itself.



represent It. *pellegrino*,<sup>1</sup> probably the earliest Italian word adopted by Teutonic.

The reason for this remarkably early borrowing is obvious to anyone who considers geographically the old path to Rome. The pilgrim on his way through France would hear himself called a *pèlerin*, but, when he got into the south, with a view to embarking at Marseilles, he would get to know the Provençal *pelegrin*. If, as a really virtuous pilgrim, he avoided the sea-passage and tackled the Alpine passes, the Roumansh *pelegrin* would also greet his ears. Either of these would account for the German and English words, but the name by which the Holy City herself saluted him would naturally stamp itself most deeply on his memory.

## Plot

The accepted meaning of a word may be definitely fixed by an historical event. This has happened to *plot*, the current use of which dates from "Gunpowder treason and plot." The oldest sense of the word appears to be a piece of ground. It is recorded once only in Anglo-Saxon, in a passage from a "charm" of the 11th century, in which it appears to have been rather dragged in for the sake of alliteration: "Ne plot ne ploht, ne turf ne toft, ne furh ne fot-mæl, ne land ne læse," which may be rendered, "Neither plot nor plough-land, neither turf nor toft, neither furrow nor foot-measure, neither land nor pasture."

The word does not reappear till the 14th century, after which it is fairly common in the general sense of patch, portion of any surface. By the 16th century it has come to mean ground-plan, sketch or outline of a literary work, senses which still survive. Later in the 16th century it is used for scheme, not necessarily nefarious, though sometimes with such suggestion. Spenser speaks of "divers good plottes devised and wise counsells cast alleready about reformation of that realme" (Present State of Ireland).

<sup>1</sup> The Oxford Dictionary derivation from a prehistoric form of Fr. *pèlerin* is, I think, impossible.

## PLOT

Although Shakespeare's use of the word generally suggests cunning and intrigue—

Know, worthy prince, Sir Valentine, my friend,  
This night intends to steal away your daughter;  
Myself am one made privy to the plot

(Two Gentlemen of Verona, III, 1)—

he does not, so far as I know, use it in the purely political sense. For this he has *complot*, introduced from French in the 16th century. Thus Bolingbroke, accusing Mowbray, says:

All the treasons, for these eighteen years  
Complotted and contrived in this land,  
Fetch'd from false Mowbray their first head and spring

(Richard II, I, 1)

So our word *plot*, established in the political sense at the time of Guy Fawkes, may be regarded as a blend of the older *plot* and the more newly borrowed *complot*.

Before discussing the etymology of these words, a curious variation in pronunciation has to be noted. For "plot of ground" we often find *plat*, e g, in the Authorized Version, "Now therefore take and cast him into the *plat* [Tyndale, *plott*] of ground, according to the word of the Lord" (2 Kings ix. 26). This has been explained as due to the unrelated word *plat*, flat surface, as in "plat of the sword" (Fr. *plat de l'épée*), a phrase used by Chaucer, and there is no doubt something in this theory. But there was a general tendency in later Mid. English and in Tudor times to confuse the two sounds. Queen Elizabeth wrote *stap* for *stop*, anticipating by a century and a half Lord Foppington's "Stap my vitals!" Sylvester, in 1592, rhymes *wrap* and *shop*. Mary Queen of Scots writes to Babington (July 17, 1586), "This is the platt which I finde best for this enterprise," and, according to contemporary evidence, Titus Oates, a century later, regularly brayed about the *plaat* he had discovered. The form *strap* has, except in the language of the

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barber, completely replaced the older and correct *strop*.<sup>1</sup> We have preserved, as a euphemism, the *Gad* which was once a common variant pronunciation of *God*, and the comparatively mild *drat* is a worn-down form of the rather vigorous *God rot!* For *platform*, Fr. *plate-forme*, lit. flat form, i.e. plane figure, we often find *plotform*, and, as this was originally used in its proper sense of ground-plan, scheme, it was no doubt mentally associated with *plot*. Shakespeare makes Joan of Arc say:

And now there rests no other shift but this,  
To gather our soldiers scatter'd and dispers'd  
And lay new platforms to endamage them

(1 Henry VI, II, 1)

A little later we find, in the old play of Grim the Collier, "A sudden plotform comes into my mind" Finally our *platoon*, revived as a military word during World War I, from Fr *peloton*, a small company, was sometimes written *plotoon* in the 16th century

For the etymology of *plot* the Oxford Dictionary gives only the rather doubtful Anglo-Saxon word mentioned on p. 182. But, as this has no Teutonic congeners, it is probably a borrowed word. In my opinion it is Fr *pelote*, which now means most usually a ball<sup>2</sup> (of thread, snow, etc.) or a pin-cushion. In Old and Modern French it is also used of any close aggregation or compact mass, whether of persons or things. From the sense of clod would easily develop that of ground (the same transition is seen in *glebe*, from Lat. *gleba*, clod), with which the English history of the word starts.

*Complot* had a similar sense in Old French, its earliest occurrence (12th century) being in reference to a knot or bunch of people, a sort of *peloton* (v.s.). The sense of conspiracy is evolved naturally from that of a closely associated group of people.

<sup>1</sup> Anglo-Saxon, from Lat. *strappus*.

<sup>2</sup> Also the ball, Sp. *pelota*, used in the famous Basque game.

## RINGLEADER

When we say that "the plot thickens," we have a mental image of intrigue becoming more complicated or of mystery becoming more dense. I should very much like to know the original meaning of this phrase, for which the Oxford Dictionary has no record earlier than 1671, and then only in the now accepted sense. I conjecture a development like that of French "*la pelote se grossit*," lit. the snowball gets bigger, now used only figuratively. "*La pelote se grossit se dit de projets, d'intérêts, de ressentiments qui s'accumulent, par comparaison avec la pelote de neige qui se grossit en roulant*" (Littré). The correspondence of this phrase with our "plot thickens" seems to me a strong argument for the ultimate identity of *plot* and *pelote*.<sup>1</sup>

## Ringleader

Human nature being what it is, we are not surprised to find that words of complimentary or neutral sense inevitably tend to become depreciatory. We can hardly conceive of a "ring" of people unassociated with some nefarious purpose, or of a *ringleader* not occupied in crime. Such is the prevailing sense of the word from its earliest records, and the only one known to Shakespeare (2 Henry VI, II, 1), but it does not follow that the neutral sense, though less amply exemplified, may not be the original.

Latimer, in his second sermon before Edward VI, calls Joab the *ryngleader*, i. e. commander, of David's army. At a rather earlier date Coverdale renders the Vulgate "*Apprehendit de viris regionis, qui principes erant malitiae, quinquaginta viros*" by "He toke L. men of the countre, which were the ryngleders of them" (1 Maccabees, ix. 61), where the Authorized Version has "authors of that mischief"; but, elsewhere, translating Erasmus's Paraphrases to Ephesians, he writes, "Some he would have to be chief, as

<sup>1</sup> The mute *-e-* would automatically disappear, as in *platoon* or *plush*, Fr. *peluche*.

apostles, rying leaders and autours of the gospel preaching "

*Ringleader* naturally suggests the synonymous Ger. "*radelsfuhrer* the ringleader, the head or chief of a tumultuous, or seditious faction" (Ludwig) *Radel* is a South German dim of *rad*, a wheel. It was also used of a ring of people. Kluge traces *radelsfuhrer* back to the peasant revolts of 1520, and quotes from a chronicle of 1525, "Die bauern fuhrten damahlen ein pflugs-radl in ihren fahnen, darzu sie, als zu einem bauern-werkzeug, geschworen haben, beyeinander, gleichwie die spaichen in dem rad, beständig zu verbleiben, dahero das gemeine sprichwort entstanden, dass man die aufwickler<sup>1</sup> und aufrühranstifter noch heutiges tags radfuhrer nennet " <sup>2</sup> If this is correct, there can hardly be any connection in origin with the English word, which is recorded c 1500 I must confess, however, that the banner with a strange device borne by these early rotarians sounds to me very much like the invention of an early etymologist, or like an attempt to give emblematic significance to the word *radel*, which was also used in the 16th century for a company of landsknechts <sup>3</sup>

I suggest that a *ringleader* (possibly also a *radelsfuhrer*) was originally one who led the dance Before the waltz and the lancers were expelled from our ballrooms, they were called "round" and "square" dances respectively But the practice of ladies allowing strangers to clutch them by the waist and whirl them round the room only came in after 1800. The waltz alarmed that eminent puritan Lord Byron (see

<sup>1</sup> For "*aufwiegler* an uproar-maker, the ringleader of a faction, a firebrand of sedition" (Ludwig)

<sup>2</sup> The peasants bore at that time a plough-wheel in their banners, by which, as a peasant implement, they had sworn to remain steadfastly together, like the spokes of the wheel, whence arose the common saying that firebrands and rebel leaders are still nowadays called radfuhrer

<sup>3</sup> *Landsknecht*, a mercenary soldier, whence Fr "*lansquenet* a lance-knight or German footman" (Cotgrave), is from *land*, country, and *knecht*, "knight," servant. For an erroneous etymology see Quentin Durward, ch. 17.

## RINGLEADER

his poem, *The Waltz*, 1813), and is defined by a writer of 1825 as a "riotous and indecent German dance." The earlier "round" dance was, like the Fr *ronde*, a figure dance in which the performers were arranged in a round or "ring," and, although the Oxford Dictionary does not appear to record *ring* in the specific sense of dance, it can be shown (v i.) that it had this sense.

The earliest Latin dictionary in which I have found our word is Holyoak (1612), who has "*ringleader*. praesultor, dux," a *praesultor* being, according to Cooper, "he that leadeth the daunce among the Romaine priestes called Saliu Sacerdotes." ΓΙ χορυφαῖος, ringleader, was originally the head of the chorus in Attic drama. In a *Nominale* of c 1340 occurs the French phrase, "Femme treche mene pur deduyt," with the rendering "Woman the ryng leduth for joye." The Oxford Dictionary associates this with *ring*, a circular group of persons, but Old Fr. *treche*, properly *tresce* or *tresche*,<sup>1</sup> means dance, and dance only. The modern French for a ringleader is *meneur*, which may very well be for the earlier "meneur de ronde ou de tresche."

None of the European languages, so far as I know, except possibly German (v.s), offers a parallel formation to *ringleader*. Dutch *belhamel*, lit bell-ram, is glossed "ring-leader" in 17th-century dictionaries. This is equivalent to Ger "*leithammel* the bell-weather, the weather that wears the bell, whereby all the flock is led or guided" (Ludwig). *Bell-wether* has the same sense in English. Holinshed, in his account of the disputes between the Aquinists and Scotists, writes of "Thomas being the ringleader of the one sect and Scotus the belweadder of the other."

<sup>1</sup> Cf Provençal and Old It *trasca*. The etymology of Old Fr *treschuer*, to dance, is probably Goth *thriskan*, to thresh, originally to trample. "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn" (Deuteronomy xxv 4). Our *thrash*, to belabour, is simply a flail-wielder's metaphor. The original sense of "treading" appears in *threshold*, of which the second element, though found in all the Teutonic languages, is unexplained.

## Rummage

The curious change in the meaning of this word <sup>1</sup> is noted by Trench in his *Select Glossary*: "It is a sea-term, and signified at first to dispose with such orderly methods goods in the hold of a ship that there should be the greatest possible room, or 'roomage'" This etymology is ultimately correct, but there is a good deal of word-history between the Teutonic word for space and the modern *rummage*

In a paper read to the Philological Society in 1909, I pointed out that *rummage* was originally a noun, not formed in English from *room*, but representing the synonymous Fr *arrumage*, now superseded by *arrimage*. This view is adopted by the Oxford Dictionary, which defines *rummage* as "the arranging of casks, etc., in the hold of a ship," with an example (*romage*) for 1526. This leaves two questions undecided, viz. the reason why nautical English should have borrowed this French word, and the etymology of the latter. It seems also to have survived among sailors much later than appears from the Oxford Dictionary records, e.g. Lescallier (1777) has "*to rummage the hold*: changer l'*arrimage*," in which the idea of moving things about also appears

Medieval England drank proportionately much more wine than modern England. So considerable was the wine-trade that a special impost called *turnage* (surviving in the historical "tonnage and poundage"), levied on every tun of wine, formed an important part of the royal revenue. Most of the wine came from Bordeaux, and it was from Bordeaux that we borrowed a word originally used in the

<sup>1</sup> This change is well illustrated by the definition in Phillips's *New World of Words* "*Rumidge*, in navigation, is to remove goods or luggage out of a ship's howld, whence it is also used upon other occasions" Here the original sense is already reversed. This reversal of meaning also appears in Skinner's *Etymologiae Linguae Anglicanae* (1671) "*To rummage* or *rume* goods, vox nautica, significat autem bona praesertim in fundo navis removere" The current sense is partly due to Custom House vigilance. The nautical use of the word appears in "*rummage sale*," originally sale of unclaimed goods at the docks.

## RUMMAGE

specific sense of stowing casks in a ship's hold. According to Furetière's *Dictionnaire Universel* (1727), "On dit qu'un vaisseau est mal arrumé, lorsqu'il n'est pas à son plomb qui le fait tenir droit sur bout; car alors les poinçons<sup>1</sup> se déplacent, courent et roulent vers la pente et du heurt s'enfoncent les uns les autres, ce qui cause de grands coulages. Arrumeurs sont de petits officiers établis sur les ports, et surtout en Guyenne, que le marchand chargeur doit fournir et payer, qui ont soin de placer et de ranger les marchandises dans un vaisseau, et surtout celles qui sont en tonneaux, et qui sont en danger de coulage."<sup>2</sup> Thus, *rummage* comes from Bordeaux and contains a scrap of commercial history. It is also, as I shall show, some centuries older than the Oxford Dictionary's first record.

Cotgrave has "*arrumer* to ranke, sort, range, dispose, put in order, set in array." This form, with *-n-* for *-m-*, also recorded by Oudin (1660), and occurring early in Old French in the general sense of arranging, is important, for it shows that the key-word we are seeking was spelt both *rum* and *run*. This word is archaic Fr. "*rum*, the hole, or hold, of a ship" (Cotgrave). In Old French monosyllables ending in *-m* were commonly spelt with *-n*, e.g. *rien* is Lat. *rem*, accusative of *res*, a thing. Accordingly we find *rum* and *run* (also *reum* and *reun*) used indifferently in Old French for room, space, hold of ship. Falconer (1769) gives *rum* as equivalent to *cale*, the modern word for hold,<sup>3</sup> and Romme (1792) records it as an archaic word. "*Rum* ou *reum*, ce mot peu usité est quelquefois employé pour exprimer la capacité intérieure ou la contenance de la cale d'un vaisseau, c'est-à-

<sup>1</sup> Mod. *poinçon*, puncheon

<sup>2</sup> This is partly taken from Cleirac's *Us et Coutumes de la Mer* (1634)

<sup>3</sup> Also in "*donner rum à une roche* to give a good birth (*sic*) to, or keep aloof from, any rock, etc." Much earlier (1415), in an "*ordonnance*" for traffic on the Seine, we read that "*les bateliers garderont run l'un envers l'autre*," i.e. will keep proper space between their boats. With these examples of the use of *room*, space, sea-room, in nautical English.



## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

dire, l'espace qu'elle offre pour l'emplacement des marchandises dont on peut composer le chargement de ce bâtiment. Un vaisseau qui a une cale vaste est dit être d'un grand reum."

It is clear that from this *rum* or *run* could be formed a verb *arrumer* or *arruner*, to adapt the cargo to the capacity of the hold (cf *arranger*, from *rang*, rank). The corresponding Spanish and Portuguese verb is *arrumar*. The original source is Teutonic, but whether it is Eng *room* (Anglo-Sax *rūm*), Dutch *ruim*, Ger. *raum* (Old High Ger *rūm*), Old Norse *rūm* (whence *rum* in Danish and Swedish), or Goth *rūm*, cannot be decided. *Raum* or *schiffsraum* is the usual modern German for hold, but it is not necessary to suppose that *arrumer*, *arruner* was originally limited to nautical use. The sea sense would easily arise out of that of arrangement in general.

*Rummage*, as we have seen, is first recorded by the Oxford Dictionary for 1526, but copious records of *rumagium*, *runagium* in Med. Latin point to its having been a familiar word in Mid. English, e.g. "Ad ducendum dicta dolia usque navem et pro runagio dictorum doliorum"<sup>1</sup> (Earl of Derby's Expedition, 1390-3). The medieval examples are all connected with casks. The earliest I have found is in some royal accounts of Edward II (c. 1320). Unfortunately I have mislaid the Anglo-Latin text, but the item deals with the transport of forty casks of wine from Lostwithiel to Fowey, and mentions (1) the "rollage" from the merchant's cellar to the water-side, (2) the "towage" by water, (3) the "gyndage,"<sup>2</sup> i.e. hoisting on board, (4) the "rummage" (*rumagium*) in the hold. If "Latin" *rumagium* could be thus used, c. 1320, *rummage* must have been already a familiar word in nautical English. In fact, its use must go back to the beginnings of the wine-trade with Bordeaux.

<sup>1</sup> For bringing the said casks to the ship and for the stowing of the said casks.

<sup>2</sup> From Fr *gunder*, to hoist; cf. *guindas*, windlass.

## Sallet

The general name for a helmet up to the beginning of the 15th century was *basnet*,<sup>1</sup> or *bacinet*, meaning a little basin. This was probably worn in battle by all ranks, e.g. the magnificent effigy of the Black Prince in Canterbury cathedral represents him in full armour, *basnet* on head, his cumbersome tilting helmet being suspended above the tomb. In Tudor and Stuart times the usual types of helmet were the *morion* and the *burgonet*, the former of unknown origin, the latter deriving from Burgundy. These words were also vaguely used for helmet in general. Between these and the *basnet* reigned the *salade* or *sallet*, booked for 1440, on which Jack Cade puns execrably

Wherefore, on a brick wall have I climbed into this garden, to see if I can eat grass, or pick a sallet another while, which is not amiss to cool a man's stomach this hot weather. And I think this word sallet was born to do me good, for, many a time, but for a sallet, my brain-pan had been cleft with a brown-bill (2 Henry VI, iv, 10)

The immediate origin of the word is simple. It is Fr. *salade*, from It *celata* or Sp *celada*. It was the regular name, in the 15th century, for a plain steel cap worn in battle by all ranks. "The 14th and 15th century helmet was little worn in battle, being replaced in the former by the *basnet*, in the latter by the *salade*" (Skelton<sup>1</sup>). There is reason to believe that both were sometimes worn under the great ornamental helmet.

Skinner, in his *Etymologicon Linguae Anglicanae* (1671), misled by the ornamental helmets of his period, such as the "gilt engraven morion" of Spenser (*Faerie Queene*, vii, 7) or perhaps by Cicero's mention of "*galeae caelatae opere Corinthio*," i.e. helmets engraved with Corinthian work, derived *salade* from Lat *caelata*, from *caelare*, to engrave, and this etymology has been repeated ever since (*Oxford Dictionary* and Webster). Now the *sallet* was not engraved, nor

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Skelton, 19th-century antiquarian engraver

can I believe that such ornamental head-gear was served out to the rank and file of the 15th century. The *sallet*, as can be seen by a visit to any collection of old armour, was simply the *basnet* slightly elaborated; in fact, it closely resembled the "tin hat" of the modern German soldier. It was also, like the other words mentioned in this article, a general term for helmet.

Robert Estienne, author of a *Dictionarium Latino-Gallicum* (1538), has "*cassis* ung heaulme, ung bonnet de fer, une salade, ung bassinet." Cooper has "*cassis* an helmet, a salet, a cap of steele." There is no Italian verb *celare*, to engrave, but there is a very common *celare*, to conceal. It seems to me that It "*celata* a celade . . . , a steele cap, an ambush, or way-laying" (Torrano), and Sp. "*celada* an ambush, a sallet for the head" (Percyval) are parallels to It "*secreta* a thinne steele cap, or close skull, worne under a hat" (Florio), and Old Fr "*segrette* an yron skull, or cap of fence" (Cotgrave). In the Paston Letters we occasionally read of bands of fighting-men equipped with "jakkes and sallets." In French records of the same period the usual description is "*jacques et segrettes*." Ergo the *sallet* belongs ultimately to Lat *celare*, to conceal.

## Sentry

The Oxford Dictionary registers two separate words, viz. *sentry* (obsolete), contracted form of "sanctuary," and *sentry*, a sentinel. They are really identical. The etymology of this word has been obscured in the past (1) by futile attempts to connect it with the now synonymous *sentinel*, (2) by the frequent earlier spelling *centry*, (3) by complete neglect of its semantic history. Skinner (1671) has "*centry* pro *sanctuary*" and "*centry*, v. *sentinel*." The Oxford Dictionary suggests "perhaps a shortening or back-formation from *centrinel*, obsolete form of *sentinel*." So also Webster. The two words have naturally been confused, but they are quite unrelated.

## SENTRY

The earliest record I have found of *sentry*, sanctuary, is "He hath no way now, to slyppe out of my hands, but to take sentrie in the hospital of Warwick" (Nashe, 1590). The word is by no means obsolete as a local term. Many of our old country churches have adjacent "sentry-fields" (usually spelt *centry*-) and there are also "*centry-garths*" and "*centry gates*."

It is a recognized phenomenon that an abstract term connected with an action is also used of the place where that action is performed, then of the body of men performing it, and finally of the individual. Thus Lat *custodia* is explained by Holyoak (1612) as "keeping, charge, guard, watch and ward, a prison, a watch-tower, a watchman." The order of meanings of *sentry* is (1) sanctuary, (2) place of refuge, (3) body of men, (4) sentinel. Cotgrave has "*garite*, a place of refuge and of safe retyrall in a rowte, disaster, or danger; the recourse of such as are discomfited; [hence:] also, the dungeon <sup>1</sup> of a fortresse, whither the beleaguered soldiers make their last retire and flight; also, a sentrie, or little box for a sentinell, built on high." Old Fr. *garite*, whence our *garret*, which also once meant a watch-tower, is now *guérite*, a sentry-box, and would probably have come to mean "sentry," if French had not borrowed *sentinelle* from Italian. *Garite* is common in Old French for sanctuary, refuge, and "prendre la garite" is Old French for "to take sanctuary."

The abstract sense survives in to "keep sentry":

Here toils, and death, and death's half-brother, sleep,  
Forms terrible to view, their centry keep

(Dryden)

and the collective sense is still in Milton:

What strength, what art can then  
Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe  
Through the strict senteries and stations thick  
Of angels watching round?

(Paradise Lost, II, 410.)

<sup>1</sup> Not an underground cell, but the *doyon* or castle-keep.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

This reduction of the abstract or collective to the individual is why so many French military terms (*recrue*, *sentinelle*, *vigie*, and the Old French originals of *spy* and *scout*) are feminine

With Cotgrave's "*eschangette* (*échangette*) a sentrie, watch-tower, beacon," we may compare *vedette*, also feminine in French, now a cavalry sentry, from It. "*vedetta* a watch-towre, a prying or peeping-hole" (Florio).

### Tenter-hooks

" 'Mrs. Corney,' said Mr. Bumble, stooping over the matron, 'what is this, ma'am? Has anything happened, ma'am? Pray answer me. I'm on—on——' Mr. Bumble, in his alarm, could not immediately think of the word 'tenter-hooks,' so he said 'broken bottles' " (Oliver Twist, ch 27). Discreet inquiry reveals the fact that most people who speak of being "on tenter-hooks" follow Mr Bumble's interpretation and associate the phrase with something spiky and a sitting posture. They regard the experience as akin to being "on thorns." Byron erroneously associated *tenter-hooks* with angling:

At present I am glad of a pretence  
To leave them hovering, as the effect is fine,  
And keeps the atrocious reader in suspense,  
The surest way for ladies and for books,  
To bait their tender or their tenter hooks

(Don Juan, xiv, 97)

Being "on tenter-hooks" is really a parallel to being "on the rack." *Tenter* is an old technical word for a stretching apparatus used to prevent cloth from warping or shrinking after being milled. Formerly the process was carried on out of doors. There are still in London three Tenter Streets, "all associated with former fields or open spaces, where the cloth-workers had their tenters or frames for stretching cloth" (Miss G. B. Rawlings, *The Streets of*

## TENTER-HOOKS

London). The Oxford Dictionary traces *tenter* back to the 14th century, and, curiously enough, the earliest quotation suggests the current figurative use "Whon the Jewes hedden thus nayled Crist on the cros as men doth cloth on a teyntur" (Hampole). Variant readings of the passage give *streynour* and *rakke*.<sup>1</sup> The latter word was at one time often used in the same sense by clothworkers, though, in this case, the "torture" sense is rather the older in English.

*Tenter* is obviously connected with Fr. *tendre*, to stretch, but the Oxford Dictionary objects that there is no record in Old French or Anglo-French of a noun *tentour*, stretcher, while Fr. *tenture* means the act, or result, of stretching, not the agent. The difficulty may be solved by considering a sense of *tenter* which the Dictionary has failed to record. Some years ago, looking over a dismantled manor-house, I noticed rows of hooks projecting from the bare walls just below the ceiling. On inquiry I was told that they were the *tenter-hooks* on which the tapestry was formerly strained. The Accounts of the York Merchant Adventurers include, for 1490, the item, "Pro le tenterhukes, pro le hangynges, et pro le candeles in dictam capellam," which is conclusive as to this use of the word, and points to derivation from Fr. "*tenture* the hanging of, or a suit of hangings,"<sup>2</sup> for a chamber" (Cotgrave).

Moreover, the earliest examples given by the Oxford Dictionary in the "clothworker" sense obviously apply to tapestry. The first is an entry of 200 *tentourhokes*, recorded in the Wardrobe Accounts of Edward IV. Even if the King did cloth-stretching as a side-line, he could hardly have needed so many *tenter-hooks* at one purchase. The preceding item is "500 tapethokes," which were certainly

<sup>1</sup> Probably of Dutch origin, cf. Dutch *rekken*, to stretch.

<sup>2</sup> Paper "hangings" began to be substituted for tapestry at the end of the 17th century. We still describe the man who sticks them on as a "paper-hanger". "I have heard the fame of paper-hangings, and had some thought of sending for a suit" (Lady Mary Montagu, 1749).

tapestry hooks, and this follows "Crochettes of the moost assize, C; of the myddell assize, CQC; of the leest assize, DCC." Evidently hooks of various kinds were in great request in His Majesty's household. I suspect that they were all connected with the purchase, noted in the same summary for the year, of arras to the extent of nearly 200 Flemish ells "of the story of Parys and Eleyne."

When distinguished visitors were accommodated at the Cold Harbour,<sup>1</sup> it was usual to send hangings to that establishment. In 1480 a vast number of tapet-hokes, *tentour-hokes* and *crochettes* of various "assizes" were sent "to the Coldharber ayenst the commyng thider of my lady Duchesse of Bourgoine for the apparaylyng of the logeing there."

The second example in the Oxford Dictionary, "For tayntyr-hokes and ffor wachyng of the sepulture, xii d." (Records of St Mary at Hill, 1492-3), points to the use of hangings in connection with funeral ceremonies or commemorations. Littré tells us, "Ce mot (*tenture*) désigne le plus souvent les pièces d'étoffe de deuil qui sont tendues, lors d'un convoi ou d'un service, dans l'intérieur et à l'extérieur de l'église ainsi qu'à la maison mortuaire." Further

<sup>1</sup> This name is very frequently, and very unnecessarily, discussed. Its origin is quite well known, and it means what it appears to mean, viz a place supplying shelter and nothing else. Miss Rawlings, in *The Streets of London*, very aptly compares the Indian "dak" bungalows for travellers. There are about seventy Coldharbours existing or recorded on our old roads, and probably as many Caldecotes. *Harbour*, refuge, shelter, is Anglo-Sax *hær-beorg*, army shelter, which, though not recorded, is certified by Old High Ger *herberga* (now *herberge*) and Old Norse *herbergi* (whence Dan. *herberge*). The Teutonic word passed into the Romance languages, giving Old Fr. *herberge* (whence modern *héberger*, to shelter, harbour), It. *albergo*, Prov. *alberga* (whence Fr. *auberge*), Sp. *albergue*. The Cold Harbour alluded to above was a mansion in Thames Street, which, at this time, was the property of the Crown and was made habitable when guests were put up there. Among the alternative "etymologies" suggested is Fr. *col d'arbres*, whatever that may mean. What this "neck o' the woods" was doing in Thames Street is not explained.

## TRET

research would probably show that the tapestry sense of *tenter* preceded the cloth-stretching sense in English <sup>1</sup>

The form is interesting. Fr. *-ure* regularly became *-er* in English. Thus *friture* gave *fritter*, *batture* gave *batter* (pudding), *bordure* gave *border*, and the archaic *tester*, canopy over a bed, is Anglo-Fr. *testure*, from Old Fr. *teste*, head. "1j couvrelitz, ove (= with) 1j testures de double worstede" (Will of Alice de Nerford, 1394) An artificial spelling has altered the pronunciation of most of the *-ure* words, but, though it is considered vastly diverting to represent uneducated speech by the spelling *figger*, that is how the unpedantic pronounce *figure*. In the 18th century all educated people pronounced words ending in *-ure* in the same way as Mrs Gamp, when she spoke of the "torters of the imposition":

Farewell, ungrateful traitor,  
Farewell, my perjured swain,  
Let never injured creature  
Believe a man again

(Dryden.)

## Tret

Small boys who started school about the time of the Franco-Prussian War acquired some items of knowledge no longer considered of vital importance, such as the difference in length of an English, a French, and a Flemish ell. There was also some vague mention, without explanation, of "tare and tret." These are old names for certain allowances made to the buyer. *Tare* is a deduction from the gross weight so as to allow for what is represented by the packing material or the vehicle employed. It is a French word, explained by Cotgrave as "losse, diminution, decay, impairment, want, or waste in merchandise." The French

<sup>1</sup> I should guess that hangings were used in England before the Flemish cloth-workers introduced their improved methods of cloth making, and that the weavers simply took over *tenter-hooks* from the tapestry experts.



## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

word is from Italian or Spanish and is ultimately of Arabic origin. *Tret* is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "an allowance of 4 pounds in 104 pounds on goods sold by weight," with the added information, "origin and history obscure." Phillips defines it as "a certain allowance that is made by merchants, before a commodity is garbled from its refuse," *garble* being used in its original sense of sifting or selecting.

As long ago as 1909 I pointed out in a paper read to the Philological Society that the origin of *tret* is quite clear. It is the Anglo-French form of Fr *trait*, pull, past participle of *traire*, which now means only to milk, but, being from Lat *trahere*, meant in Old French to pull or draw, a sense later taken over by *tirer*. *Trait* has the special meaning of "turn of the scale." Furetiere (1727) has "*trait*, en termes de mécanique, est le poids ou la force mouvante qui emporte l'équilibre. Un poids en équilibre ne trebuché point, si on n'y ajoute quelque chose pour le trait. Le frottement des parties qui se fait dans les machines demande une augmentation de force pour le trait. Les petits poids ne reviennent pas aux grands à cause du trait." In other words, the buyer received the extra amount which would have resulted from the "turns of the scale" if the goods had been weighed in smaller quantities. This etymology is given in Webster. The word is booked for 1500. In Mid English *draught* or *draft*, from *draw*, was used in the same sense.

## Trounce

The verb to *trounce* is recorded from the 16th century. The Oxford Dictionary suggests no etymology, of course rejecting the suggestion that it is Old Fr *trancher*, to cut (Lat *truncare*), which is contrary to sound and sense. Skeat defines it as "to beat with a truncheon," and derives it from Old Fr *trons*, a truncheon. This is begging the question, for *trounce* does not mean to "beat with a truncheon," nor

## TROUND.

does Old Fr. *trons* mean a "truncheon"? Skeat was perhaps misled by the fact that Old Fr. *trons* is explained in dictionaries as *tronçon*, i.e. piece, fragment, which he apparently took to mean *truncheon* in the modern sense of the English word. *Tronçon* is a diminutive of *tronc*, a trunk, and is explained by Cotgrave as "a truncheon, or little trunk; a thicke slice; luncheon,<sup>1</sup> or peece cut off". It is often used in Old French and Mid. English of the broken shaft of a lance. The resultant sense of short, thick cudgel or marshal's baton is peculiar to English and quite unknown in Old or Modern French. The verb *truncheon*, to beat, is first recorded in Shakespeare (2 Henry IV, II, 4), its earlier senses being to break a spear to pieces and to carve an eel! The shorter *trons* also meant in Old French simply stump, fragment, and had no connection with beating.

The sense-history of *trounce* illustrates a rather unusual phenomenon. As a rule it is the strong word, used from instinctive exaggeration, which gradually weakens in meaning. We can thrash our opponent at tennis, chew him up at chess, or wipe the floor with him at billiards. In *trounce* we have the process reversed. Its original meaning in English was to terrify, discomfit, etc., the word later developing the idea of physical ill-treatment.<sup>2</sup>

This is quite evident from the well-known and earliest example, from the Bible of 1551: "But the Lord trounced [Authorized Version, *discomfited*] Sisara and all his charrettes, and all his hoste with the edge of ye swerde before Barak" (Judges iv. 15). Here *trounced* represents the *perterritus*, i.e. terrified, of the Vulgate, and the synonymous ἐξέστρησε of the Septuagint. The renderings in the two Wyclifite versions are *feeryde* (= frightened) and *made afeerd*. The current meaning, to thrash, is not clearly evidenced till the 17th century. Another sense, to punish by

<sup>1</sup> The original sense of *luncheon* was "chunk."

<sup>2</sup> The process is unusual, but is also illustrated by *chastise* and *castigate*, which mean etymologically to purify, make chaste.

## WORDS ANCIENT AND MODERN

legal action, still survives in the Somerset dialect, and this is the only meaning of the word that I can discover in the early Latin dictionaries, e.g. Littleton (1677) has "*trounce*: male mulctare," i.e. to fine heavily. It is noteworthy that in several counties, according to the English Dialect Dictionary, *trounce* still altogether lacks the belabouring sense and means simply to discomfit.

*Trounse* or *trounce* seems to be a secondary form of *trance*. From Lat. *transire*, to pass over, French formed *transir*, to die. The corresponding noun *transe*, whence our *trance* (with a meaning unknown in French), acquired, via the sense of throes of death (*les transes de la mort*), that of "extreme feare, dread; anxietie, or perplexitie of mind" (Cotgrave). This is the original meaning of the Mid. Eng. *traunse*, though the modern sense also appears in Chaucer. The Oxford Dictionary quotes from Gower.

This cherles herte is in a traunce,  
As he which drad him of vengence  
(*Confessio Amantis*, III, 321)

I conjecture that *traunse*, fear, gave birth to a verb, meaning to frighten, and that this later became *trounce*. It may be asked whether such a change of vowel is possible. The answer is in the affirmative. There is another word *traunce* (Mid. Eng. *traunce*), of unknown origin, meaning something like to prance, tramp, "traipse." It is used by Chaucer and Gower. It also occurs in the 16th century in the form *trounce*, a word employed by Scott (*Redgauntlet*, ch. 11) and other northern writers. Both *traunce* and *trounce*, according to the English Dialect Dictionary, are still in general use in the north in the "traipsing," trudging sense. If this *traunce* could become *trounce*, our word could do the same.<sup>1</sup> The only missing link in the argument is a record of Mid. Eng. *traunse*, to terrify.

<sup>1</sup> There is also the parallel of the obsolete *jaunce* or *jounce*, to make prance, etc., the former of which is used by Shakespeare (*Richard II*, v, 5).

## Trudge

Mental association with *tramp* and *tread* has altogether changed the meaning of this word and consequently obscured its etymology. It now means, according to the Oxford Dictionary, "to walk laboriously, wearily, or without spirit, but steadily and persistently." This idea first appears in Johnson, who has "to travel laboriously, to jog on, to march heavily on." But Bailey, twenty years earlier, has "to trot up and down, to toil and moil about a business." The second part of this definition is partly due to association with *drudge*. Tusser rhymes the two words more than once:

Good husband, he trudgeth, to bring in the gaines,  
Good huswife, she drudgeth, refusing no paines

This is given by the Oxford Dictionary as an example of walking laboriously. It really refers to the busy activity of the master of the farm.

The first Latin dictionary in which I have found the word (Littleton, 1735) explains *trudge* by *festinare*, *cursitare*, which are a long way removed in sense from the current use. These Latin verbs are explained by Cooper as "to hie apace, to make speede," and "to runne up and downe, to runne often." The earliest Oxford Dictionary record (1547) for the verb, "If the belles rynge in any place for an obit, than (= then) oure gentyl gallants trudge apace," refers obviously to a hasty departure. In fact, the essential 16th-century meaning was not to walk or plod, but to start off. That the word was a colloquialism is shown by its absence from the earlier Latin-English dictionaries and from the Authorized Version.

Shakespeare's use of *trudge* leaves no doubt as to its 16th-century meaning. When Mistress Ford was making her arrangements for the removal of Falstaff in the buck-basket, she bade her servants, "Take this basket on your shoulders; that done, trudge (i.e. start off) with it in all haste" (*Merry Wives*, iii, 3). It is often used with *apace*, in

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the phrase "we must be trudging," and in the imperative *trudge*, i.e. be off with you. It is not till about the middle of the 18th century that the sense of laborious progress is clearly evidenced. In fact, *trudge* and *pack*, both used of hurried departure, are practically synonymous in the 16th and 17th centuries. The latter is very common in Shakespeare. I will quote only two examples:

Hence! pack! there's gold, you came for gold, ye slaves  
(Timon, v, 1) "  
 Ere a fortnight make me elder,  
 I'll send some packing that yet think not on it  
(Richard III, iii, 2)

The two synonymous words are often coupled:

None other speech prevaylde  
 But "packe" and "trudge," at leysure was to (= too) long  
(Gascoigne, Fruites of Warre)

*Trudge* is derived, in my opinion, from Fr. *trouser*, to pack, and acquired its meaning<sup>1</sup> in the same way as *pack*, to be off. *Trouser* gave regularly *truss*, a common word in Mid English, explained in Stratmann and Bradley's Middle English Dictionary as "pack up; be off; go away." This survived till the 16th century

As for all other, let them tusse and packe  
(Skelton, Magnificence, l. 1774)—

disappearing, in this special sense, as the synonymous *trudge* came into use. With Skelton's "truss and pack" cf. Shakespeare's "trudge and pack":

If every one knows us, and we know none,  
 'Tis time, I think, to trudge, pack, and be gone  
(Comedy of Errors, iii, 2.)

For the apparent phonetic irregularity involved in the change of *truss* to *trudge*, we have the invaluable evidence of Mrs. Gamp. It will be remembered that that lady, when she saw the Antwerp packet, remarked, confounding the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the familiar Fr. *trouser baggage*, to pack up and go.

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prophet with the whale, "And I wish it was in Jonadge's belly I do" On the occasion when she "propoged" a toast, and her long friendship with Betsy Prig came to an end, she addressed that lady as "bage creetur" and animadverted on her "bragian" words. In fact, she regularly substituted a palatal for a sibilant. There is no reason to suppose that Mrs. Gamp's language was peculiar to her. It was rather a survival, noted by one of the most observant men who ever lived, of a pronunciation which must have had a considerable vogue in earlier centuries.<sup>1</sup> It appears also in *grudge*, from Old Fr. *groucier*.<sup>2</sup> The nautical *forge*, as in to "forge ahead," is a still better parallel. It is a corruption, recorded as early as 1611, of *force*. The identity of *force* and *forge* is made quite clear by the evidence of the two best nautical dictionaries of the 18th century: "*To forge over* (corrompu de *to force*) · passer en faisant force de voiles sur un banc de sable, ou à travers les glaces; on dit aussi en françois *forcer*" (Lescallier), "*franchur un banc*: to force over a bank" (ibid.); "*franchur une roche*: to pass over, or forge off from, a rock" (Falconer). Nautical speech has preserved this corruption, just as in *wear* (for *veer*) it has kept the solitary surviving example of the once widespread confusion between initial *v-* and *w-*.

<sup>1</sup> I have ventured to suggest elsewhere (Cornhill, May 1922) that Mrs. Gamp spoke English like an early Georgian duchess.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the American *grouch*. It is, unfortunately, impossible to link the military *grouse* with Old Fr. *groucier*, as there is a gap of centuries between them.

### Chapter III

## SHAKESPEARE AND WAGSTAFFE

IN no region of word-lore has the amateur philologist done more deadly work than in the history of our surnames. Bardsley, in his valuable Dictionary of English and Welsh Surnames, says of Shakespeare, "It is impossible to retail all the nonsense that has been written about this name. Silly guessing has run riot on the subject. Never a name in English nomenclature so simple or so certain in its origin. It is simply what it looks—*shake-spear*." To this it may be added that no European philologist of any reputation would dissent from this opinion. This form of nickname, verb and object (cf. stopgap, daredevil, makeshift, sawbones, killyjoy, etc.), is represented by hundreds of surnames in the chief European languages, and by thousands in medieval records, the large majority of them having proved too crude or too cumbersome to survive in the surnominal struggle for life, e.g. our medieval Cullebulluc (kill-bullock) has disappeared, though the French Tubeuf still flourishes and is appropriately represented by a butcher in the Bottin<sup>1</sup> for 1907. Early examples are the Norman Taillefer,<sup>2</sup> now Telfer, and Taillebois, now Tallboys. English are Doolittle, Turnbull, Lovejoy, Makepeace, Breakspear, Drinkwater. These and hundreds of others are plentifully attested in the medieval Rolls, from the 12th century onward. They are never preceded by *de* or *atte*, so cannot be local; they are never found as first names, so cannot be "corruptions" of baptismal names; they are never preceded by *le* or *the*, so cannot be occupational. Therefore, to anyone

<sup>1</sup> The Paris Directory, published by Didot Bottin

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the Italian name Tagliaferro.

who understands what is meant by philological evidence, they are nicknames, easily paralleled in other languages, e.g. Drinkwater, perhaps the commonest English surname of this type, has as equivalents French Bouleau, Italian Bevilacqua, German Trinkwasser.

The etymology of Shakespeare has long been for philologists an *affaire jugée*, but now comes along a theorist, whom, in accordance with the best modern legal precedent, we will call Mr. X, to tell us that we are all wrong, and that the existence of the corresponding German Schuttespeer and the Italian Crollanza means nothing. Briefly put, Mr. X's view seems to be that the English name Saxby may have been corrupted in French to Saquespee, and then in English to Shakespeare. The latter may also be of local origin, or be derived from an Anglo-Saxon personal name compounded from *seax*, knife, "or the even more common prototheme Sige." Finally "it seems not unlikely that the name Shakespeare is derived from several distinct sources." Similar theories are propounded for the equally obvious Shakeshaft and Shacklock.

All this is, of course, etymological moonshine. It may be conceded that Shakespeare could have occasionally interchanged with Saquespee, the names having enough superficial likeness of sound and sense to be confused at a period when the surname was a very loose adjunct of the fore-name. We find, for instance, the compromise Sakespere, and even Drawspere and Drawespe. Both Saquespee and the synonymous Draweswerd<sup>1</sup> were well-established, medieval names, the former being found as early as the 12th century, e.g. Jordan Sacheespee is in the Pipe Rolls. It survives in French Sacqupé (Bottin, 1907), but in England has been absorbed by Saxby. Mr. X tells us that "Sakespee is approximately French." Rather more

<sup>1</sup> During the bilingual period, i.e. c. 1066-1300, French surnames run parallel with native surnames in England. It is quite possible that the same man was known both as Saquespee and Draweswerd.



than "approximately," since *sachuer* (Norman *saquier*, *sakier*) *l'espee* is as common in Old French romance as to "draw the sword" is in medieval English.

The existing Shake- names are Shacklock, Shakelance (very rare), Shakeshaft or Shackshaft, Shakespeare. Apparently obsolete are Shakesheath, Shakestaff. There are one or two more which I omit *pudoris causa*. Now, if we look up the transitive verb *shake* in the Oxford Dictionary, we find as earliest senses to brandish, to agitate (some part of the body), to wag, flap, etc. And the three oldest quotations are just what we want!

Heo scæken on heore honden spere swithe stronge

(Layamon, l. 26481)

Schaftes thai gun schake

(Sir Tristram, l. 885)

Thei schulen schake lockis, as the whelpis of lions<sup>1</sup>

(Wychliff, Jeremiah 11. 38)

From which it may be reasonably inferred that the "shaking" of spears, shafts and locks was not a practice unknown to the Middle Ages! The gesture or mannerism which gave his surname to Hamo Shakeloc, who is registered in the Hundred Rolls of 1273, seems to have specially impressed our observant ancestors, for we find also John Werpeloc in the Leicester Borough Records and William Wrytheloc in the Register of Malmesbury Abbey, both verbs meaning something like to twist.

With Breakspear one may compare the once common *Briselance*, still found in France. It is quite obvious to normal intelligence that Shakespeare belongs to the same type as *Taille-fer*, the still more formidable *Mange-fer*, the existing German name *Hauenschild* (swash-buckler) and its Middle English parallel *Crakesheld* (crack-shield). We may regret that our ancestors were so fond of shaking, breaking, and cracking, but we cannot help it.

The early Shakespeares earned their name in the same way as the early Benbows, who, in the Middle Ages, bore

<sup>1</sup> Vulgate, "Excutient comas quasi catuli leonum."

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the nickname "bende-bowe" Nor had Robert Greene any illusions as to the "shake" of Shakespeare, when he spitefully described him (in *A Groat's Worth of Wit*, c. 1590) as "in his owne conceit the only shake-scene in a countrie." Finally, Mr. X himself supplies us with most valuable evidence in the surname of one Fewterspere, whom he has discovered in the Cheshire Plea Rolls for 1362. If we look up *fewter* in the Oxford Dictionary, we find the definition "to put (a spear) into the 'fewter,' or rest," with four quotations, in all of which the word is naturally associated with spear, the last date being from Spenser

Which being yeilded, he his threatfull speare  
Gan fewter, and against her fiercely ran.

(Faerie Queene, IV, vi, 10.)

If a medieval Englishman could be named from "fewtering" his spear, one imagines he might also be named from the more ostentatious gesture of "shaking" it.

With the Shake- names go the Wag- names, of which the commonest is Wagstaffe, which looks like a kind of Sancho Panza counterpart of the quixotic Shakespeare. But *wag* had no ludicrous suggestion in Middle English. It was equivalent to *shake*, e.g. Walter Waggespere is in the Lancashire Assize Rolls see also Matthew xxvii. 39 Its oldest transitive sense was identical with that of *shake*, i.e. to brandish (a weapon) defiantly. It is used with weapon in Havelok (c. 1300), the Oxford Dictionary's next quotation being from Coverdale (1535).

Be not afrayde for the Kinge of the Assirians—he shal wagg [A V lift up] his staff at thee, but, etc. (Isaiah x 24.)

Mr. X tells us that Wagstaffe "might well be a personal name and it also has the appearance of being local," but I imagine that it would be hard to put forward similar conjectures for the synonymous Reginald Waggebastun, who is registered in the Close Rolls for 1227-31. Less common are Waghorn, also recorded early, and Wagspear, which seems

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